"A TANGLE OF FATE," THRILLING, REMARKABLE BEGINS NEXT WEEK

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THE WHITE PRINCESS;

or, THE LURE OF THE NORTH

By WILLIAM PERRY BROWN, author of "The Mislaid Man," "Marriage by Proxy," "A Chattanooga Girl," etc

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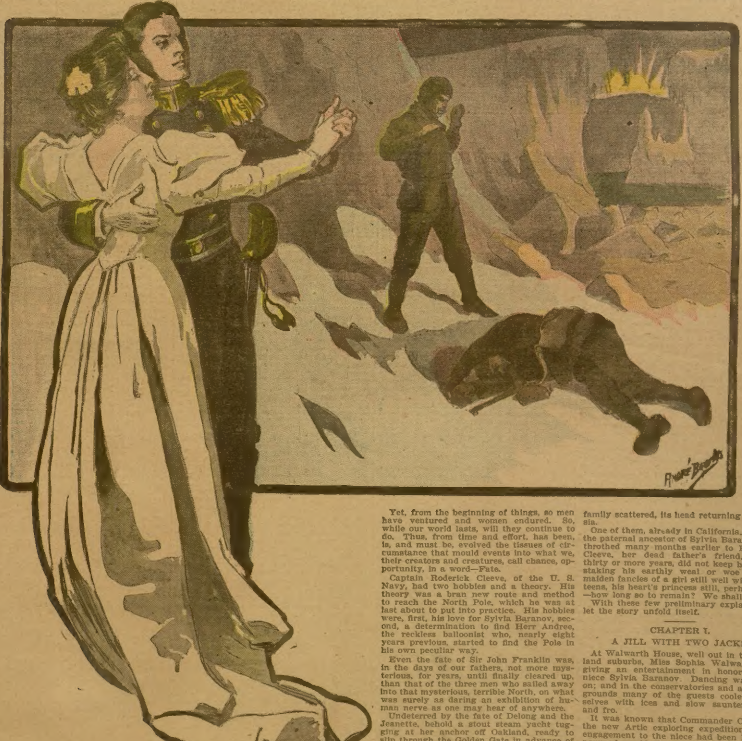
PROLOGUE.

A SCION OF THE BARANOVS.

The year 1905 was the time, and the broad bay of San Francisco the scene, where this strange story opened.

Surely as singular a tale of love and death, of privation and self-sacrifice, of stress of mind and endurance of body, as curious people may hope to hear, outside of dreams and in sober fact.



Yet, from the beginning of things, so men have ventured and women endured. So, while our world lasts, will they continue to do. Thus, from time and effort, has been, is, and must be, evolved the tissues of circumstance that mould events into what we, their creators and creatures, call chance, opportunity, in a word—Fate.

Captain Roderick Cleeve, of the U. S. Navy, had two hobbies and a theory. His theory was a bran new route and method to reach the North Pole, which he was at last about to put into practice. His hobbies were, first, his love for Sylvia Baranov, second, a determination to find Herr Andree, the reckless balloonist who, nearly eight years previous, started to find the Pole in his own peculiar way.

Even the fate of Sir John Franklin was, in the days of our fathers, not more mysterious, for years, until finally cleared up, than that of the three men who sailed away into that mysterious, terrible North, on what was surely as daring an exhibition of human nerve as one may hear of anywhere.

Undeterred by the fate of Delong and the Jeanette, behold a stout steam yacht tugging at her anchor off Oakland, ready to slip through the Golden Gate in advance of the later swarm of vessels carrying gold seekers to Juneau, Nome, and other Alaskan camps.

Cleeve had named the yacht "Andree," while an up-to-date air ship, stowed with other apparatus deep in the bowels of the stout hull of the exploring craft, bore the name of the "White Princess," typical of Sylvia's semi-Russian ancestry, thus witnessing to the strength of the two passions that dominated that sturdy, gloomy, indomitable man.

The Baranovs, old time autocrats and Russian rulers at Sitka, when Alaska was a remote dependency of the Czar's dominions, had not prospered there after Uncle Sam, forty years ago, acquired their rights and took away their privileges. So the family scattered, its head returning to Russia.

One of them, already in California, became the paternal ancestor of Sylvia Baranov, bethrothed many months earlier to Roderick Cleeve, her dead father's friend, whose thirty or more years, did not keep him from staking his earthly weal or woe on the maiden fancies of a girl still well within her teens, his heart's princess still, perhaps, yet—how long so to remain? We shall see.

With these few preliminary explanations, let the story unfold itself.

CHAPTER I.

A JILL WITH TWO JACKS.

At Walwarth House, well out in the Oakland suburbs, Miss Sophia Walwarth was giving an entertainment in honor of her niece Sylvia Baranov. Dancing was going on; and in the conservatories and adjoining grounds many of the guests cooled themselves with ices and slow sauntering too and fro.

It was known that Commander Cleeve of the new Artic exploring expedition, whose engagement to the niece had been long announced would give orders for departure on his return from the East. A wire from Denver the night before, had announced that he would be back the following day. Hence the party, and a rather free attendance of officers from the "Andree," awaiting their captain, whom a counter telegram from the Mistress of Walwarth House, would notify, probably at Sacramento, of these doings at the home of his fiancee, to mark his departure on as desperate a venture, perhaps, as was that of the man, whose final doom, they were to try to unravel.

The earlier evening had lapsed, yet the dancing continued. Lieutenant Stanton, after the last "two step," sought a palm shadowed aisle in one of the conservatories with his partner, looked again at his watch, and opined that the Express must be behind time, or Captain Cleeve would surely have put in an appearance before now.

"Are you anxious for him to arrive?—I am not," murmured the fair, blonde girl at his side, nestling there as if this clean-shaven young naval ensign, hardly out of his teens, should have been the tardy fiance whom all were expecting. Stanton pressed the fingers that rested on his arm, for her decided words, apparently, ignited a train of emotions in both, that could no longer be restrained.

Time pressed. Soon one would appear who by virtue of a school girl's year-old promise, and his seniority of rank, would shatter love's young dreams unavowed, unless spoken now.

"I have not seen him privately for months," whispered she. "Yet the tone of his letters makes me afraid. He is so confident, so undoubting, so sure! Yet he did not visit me at Palo Alto, nor here, but very seldom; always taking things for granted, always sure, always writing, yet not caring, apparently whether I answered often or not. Busy, always, about that wild fearful trip where you, too, are to be dragged—and now, though you all are supposed to be leaving immediately, he remains away from me until the very last. More than that, he is late coming to my farewell party, if he, indeed, gets here at all. What a man!"

She clasped him with the one arm inside his own, nervously, then added:

"Suppose I did care for him, as—as——"

"As I hope you do for me, as I know I do for you," he interrupted, with a semi-suppressed fervor, that caused her to sigh contentedly. "Oh, Sylvia! Sylvia! Sylvia! How can I leave you—thus!"

In the silence of the mutual embrace that ensued, amid the half gloom beneath the fronded wealth of tropic foliage, it seemed, for an instant, as if the girl's sigh had an echo, somewhere behind the palms.

But the youthful couple were too self absorbed in mutual acknowledgements, confessions, avowals and the final complete surrender, to give heed to aught besides themselves.

A dim shadow melted into more distant shadows as it resumed its way through grounds and conservatories, by a short cut from the avenue to the house. Presently it returned, after a tedious greeting from many guests, with another skirted shadow, along the aisles of palms.

Sylvia Baranov and Lieutenant Stanton were going back for another waltz, when the four figures met.

"Why, it is Captain Cleeve!" exclaimed the girl, amazed, conscience stricken, perhaps, and more alarmed than pleased, as the tall, dark, mature looking man she addressed did not fail to notice. "Auntie," to the middle-aged lady who accompanied him, "when did he arrive?"

"Just now, I believe, and he rather insisted that I go with him to look you up, as his time is limited. Am I correct, Captain?"

"Entirely so," said he, though it was apparent that his smooth insistence was distasteful to the mistress of Walwarth House. "Furthermore, now that I have found Sylvia, doubtless your guests will miss their accomplished hostess if I detain you longer. Will you, therefore, pardon me if I ask Lieutenant Stanton, who is in evening dress, as I am not, to attend your return, while I have a few final moments alone with Miss Baranov, my—betrothed."

Such an air of finality dominated the concluding emphasis laid on the last word that it was impossible for either Stanton or Sylvia to overlook some special significance thereby attached. Miss Sophia seemed puzzled, yet she had a rare aptitude for knowing when to keep silence.

"Well, I trust it is all right," she acquiesced, feeling that everything, somehow was all wrong. "Do not stay away very long, or I shall send for you both." Then, taking Stanton's arm, who, beyond a simple greeting to the sudden apparition of his commander, seemed smitten into silence, the two sauntered into the reception rooms, leaving Sylvia and Captain Cleeve by themselves.

"Come," said he. "What I have to say is best said where we are least likely to be interrupted, for my time, and his time," indicating Stanton's retreating form, " here, is short."

She took his arm, awed, wondering, and with a nervousness that did not decrease as he halted precisely where the prior love demonstrations had taken place between Stanton and herself.

"Have we not gone needlessly far?" she asked.

"Not for that which I have to say to you," he replied, seating her in the secluded nook, where she and Stanton had sat and stood. "My train, was late; so, to give you the most of my time, I waived dressing and further delay by taking a trolley car from the depot, and a short cut through the grounds. I trusted that your aunt would excuse me, and she did."

Sylvia wondered if he had seen or heard anything prior to his approach with Miss Walwarth. If not, why return with her to the very spot where Stanton and herself had made the final pledge of irrepressible love?

"Pressure of my occupation has kept me from you a great deal during the last few months," he continued. "Yet I have constantly written, nor have your brief replies indicated that—that——" here the gloomy passion of the man burst through the restraint he had, with growing difficulty, placed on himself, as if he feared, for her sake, the violence of his own temper.

"Fickle as you are!" he broke forth anew, and with a suppressed vehemence that terrified her, "how was I to know you were a jilt! A jilt!"

Then seizing hold of himself, as it were, he added, in lower tones, "I heard what you and Stanton said, here; more than that, I saw all. What more would you have?"

The girl's lips parted but no word issued therefrom. Instead, she looked up at him, the embodiment of one fascinated by the horror of the situation. In Cleeve's saturnine expression, something like a sneer seemed to contend with a great regret. That the result was mental agony, none might doubt, least of all the dreamy, imaginative girl, on whose maiden faith he had staked his happiness in vain.

"What more is there to say?" he insisted, then answered the query himself, by adding, "Except—beware! I am not easily turned aside or mortally offended, and I never forget, nor—in such case as this—this!" His voice did not so much rise, as sink into deadliest emphasis. "This!—will I never forgive."

He turned and left her, dazed, yet feeling as if the irrevocable had, somehow, happened. Mechanically she wandered further from the lights and the company into the grounds without.

Meanwhile, Stanton, noticing that his captain was entering one of the drawing rooms alone, found a way to, presently, withdraw and furtively look up the whereabouts of Miss Baranov. Not finding her in the conservatory, he too, entered the grounds without, where he soon saw Sylvia. The girl was in so strange and trance-like an attitude, that he hastened at once to her side.

"Sylvia—Miss Baranov," said the lieutenant, then, as she seemed hardly conscious of his words, touching her almost timidly. "What is the matter? Did he—are you very much——"

"Look!" she interrupted in a sharp, intense whisper, so unlike her usual manner as to at once arrest his attention, for, though she seemed aware that some one was at hand, she did not appear to be specially conscious of his individual identity. "Look! Where am I? All—ice, snow, and cold." She shivered, though the summer night was warm, then her gaze grew tense, apparently, at something visible alone to her.

"I say you will not, you shall not—you dare not!" she exclaimed, as if some inward vision was terribly present to her senses, though dumb and invisible to the man she truly loved.

Stanton was alarmed, perplexed, and, in a way, awed by her, to him, unfamiliar manner. He had heard, vaguely, that one trait of her Russian blood, was a tendency to "dream dreams, and see visions." But he had put that aside as a silly nursery tale, which had, somehow, outlived its day.

Was he to be undeceived? We shall see.

CHAPTER II.

SYLVIA HAS A VISION.

Suddenly the girl sank half swooning into Stanton's arms.

"For God's sake, Sylvia!" exclaimed he, excitedly. "What can be the trouble? Is there nothing I can do?"

No reply. With her head pillowed on his shoulder, her eyes slowly closed, her respiration grew less labored.

Again her eyes opened, but instead of resting upon him, lovingly, naturally, they became fixed on vacancy in a terror-stricken glare. She appeared to be entirely unconscious of his presence, his words, his fondest endearments. Suddenly she began to beat the air with her hands.

"Take it away!" she moaned feebly. "Take it away! It is even as I feared. Nothing but revenge, misery, despair—death! I cannot, connot stand the suspense—indeed I cannot!"

"What is it you cannot stand, Sylvia? What do you mean?" entreated Stanton, half beside himself, and clasping her in his arms, restrainingly.

Suddenly the girl screamed loudly, then, fiercely struggling to free herself, stood upright and pointed again into unexplainable vacancy.

"No—no—no—you shall not!" she commanded in a sort of screaming whisper, more terribly suggestive to the hearer, than an actual shriek. "I say you shall not—ah, heavens! Have mercy—have mercy—mercy——" She smote her forehead, then raised both arms in a gesture of despair unspeakable, as if the pain was too great to bear, and sank inertly back again. Stanton was, by this time, half frantic himself.

"What can be the matter with her?" he wondered. "Does it relate to her fears for me, in any way? Oh, Sylvia! in pity speak to me—to me!"

Confused and rapid footsteps approached. New lights twinkled here and there amid the foliage. Then a dozen or more people, guests and servants, headed by Miss Sophia Walwarth, Sylvia's maternal aunt, and the mistress of Walwarth House, appeared.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded that lady in her severest tones, and eyeing her niece in grave concern. "Sylvia!"

"God knows—I don't!" exclaimed Stanton. "Oh, Miss Walwarth! Has she fainted?" He was too much excited about the girl's condition, to be sensitive to any awkwardness in his own position, just then. "Miss Baranov and I were talking together, when she suddenly seemed to be unconscious of my presence. Then, she——"

"Yes, yes," interposed Miss Walwarth, who was prudent, practical, and plain in her tastes and ways, though the wealth, even the splendor of her surroundings, might indicate otherwise. "Sylvia is never very strong. These gayeties, and the strain of preparing for them, have proved too much for her strength, I fear."

While speaking, she had taken her niece from Stanton's arms, and with the aid of her own maid, placed the girl on a rustic garden seat. Some of the ladies chafed the girl's wrists, fanned her as she lay in her aunt's arms looking as white and almost as lifeless as some of the marble statuary in the grounds. Other guests were grouped sympathetically around. One or two still held the lights they had caught up hurriedly, when Sylvia's cries rang out so startlingly amid the well-bred chatter and mirth indoors.

While George Stanton still anxiously gazed upon the expressionless features of his betrothed, he felt a firm, heavy hand fall upon his shoulder. Did this mute touch send through his veins such an unaccountable thrill? Or was it the awakening of Sylvia Baranov?

For, at this juncture, the girl again opened her eyes, and stared, like a piece of reanimated waxwork, her ashen lips slowly parting, and her tense breathing culminating in a deep-drawn sigh.

Then her unspeculative gaze quickened into a look of vivid terror. She struggled to her feet, despite Miss Walwarth's detaining efforts, pointed over Stanton's shoulder, and with faltering, startling pauses, gasped:

"Then it is true! The vision! Take him away—away! I see it all—now. There is to be no mercy—no mercy—none—nothing but deceit, torture, snow, ice—desolation of desolation!—aye, murder!—I say murder!"

With this final startling cry, she fell back once more into her Aunt Sophia Walwarth's arms.

What had Sylvia Baranov seen?

CHAPTER III.

"I LOVE HER, SHE LOVES ME."

Nothing, apparently, so far as the outward eyes of others might tell, but the rugged features of Commander Roderick Cleeve, of the Arctic Exploration Ship," Andree," as he stood, his hand on Stanton's shoulder, smiling—shall we infer—sardonically?

Did the aunt, did others, read that dark, saturnine face as Sylvia read it? Or did they innocently divine nothing more than the mere wonder expressed by George, unsuspicious of sinister designs, as he turned to his friend and captain, with:

"What can she mean—anything?" Helplessly, he spoke.

"It is hysteria, very likely," whispered Roderick Cleeve, his fingers slowly tightening their grip, until Stanton released himself by moving further to one side.

His commander, however, followed him up, to whisper:

"I am going to leave here very early. One of us should be already on board. It may as well be me. You can make our adieux to Miss Walwrath, and Syl—and her niece." He smiled grimly. "My manner, er—and presence, does not seem to be as congenial to super-imaginative young ladies—as yours." He laughed harshly. "It is the God's truth!" he added. "Don't start. Sylvia—Miss Baranov, when she awakens, will much prefer seeing you. And yet, a few—a very few short months ago——"

Cleeve hesitated, though his eyes rested on Stanton like live coals, as if he would sear the veneer of unsuspicion from the secret that lay below.

"A few months ago—what then, poor old boy?" urged Stanton, feeling very kindly towards his trusted captain and friend.

"Then I was a fool—a fool—a fool!" muttered Cleeve in his most grating tones. "Even as you are now, boy. See that you never have greater reason to repent your folly than I have now to repent my own."

He strode out through garden and conservatories, without another word. Others besides Stanton seemed curious, and were variously impressed by the captain's abrupt ways and gloomy manners. The lieutenant looked after his superior officer, more concerned than ever.

"Poor old boy!" thought the warm-hearted youngster. "He is all broken up. It is a wonder he did not strike me. Yet, at Annapolis Cleeve was always absurdly just, though none of us juniors liked his manner. Of course, he realizes how things stand, now. Probably the fear of his anger is one reason Sylvia was in such a state."

Meanwhile, Miss Walwarth, with the assistance of her maid and several of the ladies, had taken Miss Baranov from the conservatory. After a time the first returned to the drawing rooms, where the remaining guests had assembled. After apologizing to them for her protracted absence, she drew Lieutenant Stanton aside.

"My niece has revived," she said, regarding the young man sharply, "though she is greatly shaken. She desires you to remain until morning, if you will kindly accept our further hospitality."

"You are only too kind," he replied. "Need I say how delighted I would be if I was at liberty to remain. But if Sylvia—if Miss Baranov has entirely recovered, I fear Captain Cleeve will hardly like for me to stay over. We sail on the ebb tide tomorrow, or—shall I say, this afternoon?"

The mistress of Walwarth House did not relax the steadiness of her gaze. Stanton felt that she intuitively understood the pivotal nature of the situation better, possibly, than himself.

"If I am not deceived," she responded, "you have already so disregarded the wishes of Captain Cleeve in other and more vital ways, that it seems a pity to quibble over trifles. Up to this very night, I had looked on that gentleman as Sylvia's intended husband. True, he is smitten with that mania for Arctic exploration which, however desirable in some ways, is certainly rather discomforting from a—a domestic point of view. What is the 'lure of the Pole' compared to the lure of one's own fireside?"

"Yet her own ancestor was one of the first Russian governors of Alaska," interposed Stanton, though he hardly knew why he so spoke.

Miss Sophia smiled yet more knowingly, even derisively.

"Yes, but when his grandson wedded a Walwarth, who was my own aunt——"

"Pardon me, dear madam, for again interrupting you." Stanton's eyes sparkled humorously. "The brother of that aunt, your own father, was he not one of the old 'forty-niners,' an Argonaut and a born discoverer himself? I fear it is in the blood of all of us. I have heard my father say that his cruise round the world during our civil war, with Captain Semmes in the old 'Alabama,' was the most delightful time of his life.

"Yet she met the 'Kearsarge,' and—you recall the result."

"My father very nearly drowned; but he maintained that even the sinking of the famed Confederate cruiser and his own peril did not detract from the general relish of it all for him. Captain Cleeve told me once that his own surname was one of the Christian nomenclatures of his maternal uncle Captain John Cleeve Symmes, of Cincinnati, who held that the earth is not only hollow, but inhabited, on the inside, with entrances at the Poles."

Stanton shook his head dubiously. "As far as mere blood goes, I guess we are all infected that way. Yet Sylvia's dreamy temperament——"

"You seem to have acquired a habit of calling my niece Sylvia, of late."

The older woman regarded him introspectively, as if his outward aspect were moulding her thoughts into more malleable, though hardening intutions. "It is not an unreprehensible habit, unless she has given to you a certain right to be thus familiar."

Lieutenant Stanton actually blushed. He had a delightful complexion, which neither his naval exposures nor his own special itch dark tan, thickening the lineaments of his for the Pole had yet roughened into the more mature commander. His eyes sought out Miss Walwarth's meaning in her own direct scrutiny. His expectancy could brook no more delay.

Something has happened," continued the lady, "that changes the face of affairs—with her; with——" interrupting herself with startling energy. "Come! Are you, sir, not to blame? Are you not the cause?"

"Miss Walwarth, I love her!" exclaimed Stanton. "She is an angel!"

"Now we are beginning to see things—as they are," said the aunt, with decision, yet with sympathy. "Poor boy," She smiled. "I might also say poor girl. If you truly love each other, I do not know that I should say either of you nay. Yet you are only children, in discretion, if not exactly in years. Do you not know that you have mortally offended a most dangerous man?"

"Who—Captain Cleeve? Why, he and I were chums together at Annapolis; that is, as much so as a senior cadet officer could be with a green junior six or seven years younger. I was rather weakly then, physically, at least. Cleeve took me up, fought my battles for me against the oldsters, did my hardest problems, and bullied me in the most protecting way."

"So, so," mused the aunt, doubtfully. "Yet you are the one that robs him, most of all. A man seldom forgive such wrongs, a woman, never."

"For me, Cleeve would do anything," continued George, with the enthusiasm of youth. "True, he shows his hard side to others; but he has a heart of gold. I would trust him with my soul's salvation, he would divide his last dollar, and think no more of it. Did he not name me specially for this 'Andree,' expedition, in the face of a score of other applicants, just because he knew I wanted to go? Oh, no. I'll trust Rod. Cleeve, not only with my life which, but for Sylvia's sake is secondary, but my happiness——"

"And yet you have just robbed him of his, as I said. Did you know that for months, he has been engaged to my niece? He has loved her for years, it seems, and such a man seldom loves but once. His constancy to you, in mere friendship, is but a mild symptom of what real love might mean to such a nature."

"He has long been away from her," faltered Stanton, weakly.

"Yet they have corresponded regularly, and I felt sure that Sylvia cared for Captain Cleeve until—until your recent visits began to be so frequent. I am filled with perplexity."

"What else could we do, dear Miss Walwarth? I love her, she loves me. We cannot always control these things. But I do know my old friend and counsellor. I fagged for him, and I believe in him. Why, he bade me remain here to bid you and my darling good-by, then went on board himself."

"Well, perhaps your confidence is not misplaced. Yet, I feel sure, her fears for you have incited this present attack. She is a strange girl. Something occult, shall I say hypnotic?—has resulted from the strange intermixture of races, of which she is the modern product. I have even heard that one of the old Russian Baranovs, a real white princess of the North, inter-married with a Manchurian Viceroy in the old, old days. So, there you have a Tartar, as well as a Slavonic strain to account for the peculiarities of your heart's princess, or shall I still say Captain Cleeve's?"

Miss Walwarth veiled a yawn behind her fan, as she smiled.

"Mine, mine only! I love her, she loves me," he rather inanely retiterated. "Love conquers all things."

"What is the use of arguing with a pair of rhapsodists? You reason just like Sylvia. Have you weighed well all the consequences that are likely to ensue from this, this new engagement?"

"I know I love her, she loves me," was, again, all the poor boy could think of. "May I see her, Miss Walwarth?"

CHAPTER IV.

AGAIN—THE VISION!

Miss Sophia regarded the lieutenant in a pitying way, but she shook her head. "No, my dear sir, not until morning. You really cannot. She is not well. But she will not vanish, and if you must see her before leaving, you will wait until then. I want her to be happy, poor girl, for she is my nearest living relative, and will be my heir."

"Then I may rely upon you to watch over Sylvia's health while we are away in the North. She is fanciful; you are cheerful and practical. Trust me to manage old Cleeve. Poor fellow! He thinks it hard, no doubt, that I, of all men, should cross him here. Yet these things are ordered by a power that is beyond our individual control—the power of love. Believe me, I want her to be happy, and be happy myself. If Sylvia is unhappy, I am unhappy, so, there you are."

The guests gradually left, Miss Walwarth at odd minutes receiving their farewells, and at last Stanton, forced to content himself until morning, was shown to his room for the night. Miss Sophia understood his anxiety, but she only bade him be of more patience, as she, too, gave him good night.

The sun was high when a cheery, yet respectful voice wakened Lieutenant Stanton in the morning.

"Dispatch from the 'Andre,' sir," were the next words he heard.

By the door stood the tall coxswain of the captain's gig, a stalwart figure in trim, navy blue. Behind was Miss Walwarth's solemn looking footman, who evidently disapproved of this nautical intrusion.

"Beg pardon, sir," continued the coxswain, "Captain said I must be sure and deliver this to you in person, myself."

The young officer rose, sat down before the fire in his pajamas, and tore open an envelope addressed to Lieutenant George Stanton, Walwarth House, at sight of which he muttered: "I guess Cleeve knew where I would stay, very well. Nor does he propose to let me remain long, unlooked up."

"You will be on board by eleven o'clock a. m., at latest," the orders ran. "After you arrive I will go ashore. Make your final farewells, for we will sail at first turn of the ebb, not later than four p. m., certainly."

"Any reply, sir?" asked the coxswain, saluting once more, as Stanton sat, staring at the fire, the dispatch open on his knee.

The lieutenant pulled himself together, with a mental jerk, as it were. "Say to Captain Cleeve his orders will be obeyed, and—er—um-m—that is all, I believe."

"Aye, aye, sir." And the tall seaman wheeled and vanished, followed suspiciously by the solemn footman.

"So there are to be no long, tender, leave takings, if my superior officer can help it. It is now after eight. I must make myself as presentable as I can. Cleeve might have let me stay on shore until the last minute, I think. Selfish fellow! Disappointed himself, he will wink at no prolonged tendernesses on the part of others."

While dressing, and in no very good humor, the same footman arrived with a breakfast tray, containing coffee, hot rolls, butter and so on.

"We have not breakfasted, sir," said the servant. "But my missus thought you would wish to have yours while dressing, being as you might be pressed for time, sir."

"True enough," confirmed the youth, as he tipped the man, adding a liberal douceur for the other servants. "Be good enough to let Miss Walwarth and Miss Baranov know that I will await their pleasure in the library inside of ten minutes. Also hand these to them at the same time."

"These," were the written orders from the "Andree," signed in Cleeve's sprawling, irregular hand. When Stanton reached the large, comfortable room mentioned, Sylvia was already there, looking, it seemed to the lover's solicitous eye, unusually pale and fragile, yet composed.

"My own darling!" said George, taking her in his arms at once. "Too bad of old Cleeve, isn't it? He hardly gives me time to see you at all. Seems to have lost his manners, entirely, must be badly cut up."

"It is revenge rather than manners he is thinking of," was Sylvia's reply, then more solemnly than before: "George, I have had another dream."

"I am glad you term these strange spells, only dreams. I do not believe in dreams, Sylvia. Yet you made us feel very uncomfortable last night."

"Do not speak lightly, of anything—now." She laid one little hand on his shoulder, looking at her lover piteously—oh, so piteously!

Stanton felt a lump rise in his throat. He would have died for her—his own loved one. Why must she be thus self tormented? But while he helplessly debated within himself, the girl continued:

"I cannot explain why I feel so about these—these impressions that come to me whether I want them to or not. They are so fearful, so real. Last night, when we were in the conservatory, what do you think I saw? I could not tell you then, dearest. I can, now."

"What did you really see, then? Nothing, dear, nothing. What you fancied you saw—ah! What does it matter? We are here, we have each other."

His determination to ignore or make light of that which was so awfully vivid to her, only deepened her resolve to go on with her explanation, though her face whitened to the lips as the inward spell cast by her recital deepened and grew.

"At first you were with me," she went on, despite his diverting endearments of word and manner. "We were there, you and I, under those conservatory palms. Then, then—you were not there, you were gone! The palms, the lights, the warmth, utterly disappeared. For me, these comfortable surroundings were as if they were a thousand miles away."

Her manner was one of deepening, intense, absorbing earnestness.

"Suddenly I was alone, in a howling waste of snow and ice. Sounds, as of washing seas were in my ears. At first I saw no sign of human life, then two men appeared, one supporting the other. All around was a freezing desolation of snow and cold—a bone searching intensity of temperature, where the very mercury hardens in the bulb. I shudder now as I recall my own feelings, for I too, seemed to feel that crunching eternal polar atmosphere, the same as if I had actually lain there in body, instead of soul.

"One of these men was tall, strong, dark; the other wasted, frail, and helpless. The strong man laid the other down under a sheltering projection of an ice cliff, and peered through that snow punctured air, while in my ears came that unceasing moan of a sea that is never warmed against the naked earth of habitable regions. The creature talked with himself.

"'No hope,' I heard him say. 'No hope——' then he smiled, a terrible smile, and looked down on the prostrate form, lying at his feet. 'Yet, I have revenge. At least, he cannot return to her—to her!'"

Sylvia's voice rose into a kind of shriek, then suddenly fell again, when she went on: "From out the storm and gloom there came a boat, a ship's boat. It was oarless, rudderless, deserted, drifting. When the one that was strong saw it he drew its bow upon the ice and once more he smiled—oh, such a smile! It was the epitome of concentrated hatred and revenge. The smile of a nature perverted utterly by long brooding over fancied wrongs, that suddenly sees its chosen way clear.

"The man stood there, brooding, muttering, finger on lip, his eye on the other one lying helpless at his feet, as if to steel himself by the sight, against mercy's promptings. Brooding—brooding, always brooding——"

The girl, wrapped in the vividness of her recollections, grasped Stanton's arm, almost fiercely, and her large, abnormally clear eyes flashed. It seemed, in recital, as if she was again living through that, to her, awful phantasmagoria of the previous night.

"But what of all this, dearest?" remonstrated her lover, though his flesh chilled, despite his prosaic skepticisms. "Here we are—you and I, in warmth and safety. Cannot you feel that it was only a dream?"

But Sylvia proceeded as if she had not heard his words, nor felt his caresses. Her voice rose into a half scream.

"The villain who meditated this treachery was Roderick Cleeve, the helpless victim—you! Yes, George—you!"

She gasped, shivered, while Stanton, somewhat impressed, bent over her tenderly. He strove to reassure her again.

"My poor darling, these horrible fancies are killing you. Can you not discard such unhealthy fears? I have no faith in them. They savor too much of the devil and his belongings."

"Ah, if I only could rid myself of their recurrence! But, I have before this noted one thing. Listen!" Her voice sank to a sharp whisper, that thrilled him like the unexpected touch of a dead hand. "When these sights are telepathically repeated; when I see them, hear them again, they foretell a real happening: a catastrophe yet to come. Deferred, perhaps, but inevitable, inexorable as death.

"Last night, in bed, this vision was repeated exactly as it came to me before. I cannot explain how or why, but I feel, I know, that if you go upon this fatal, horrible lure of the North, this Arctic search for the vestiges of a man who was even more mad than Captain Cleeve himself on the subject of the Pole, you—George Stanton, go to your death."

She clutched him again with a frantic energy, as if she would pluck him from the situation her imagination had pre-created. A footstep sounded in the hall without. The nervous tension was too much. Sylvia threw herself in her lover's arms.

"Save me!" she gasped, nestling close, as if quite beside herself, lest, for a third time she should be menaced with the sight of his coming peril.

This strange and romantic story of the lure of the great white North, of love and bravery and extraordinary adventure, will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. Do not miss the pleasure and instruction of reading this story to the end. It will abundantly repay you. If you are not already taking the Ledger regularly or if your subscription has expired, we strongly advise you to subscribe at once and get the balance of this startling story, as well as numerous great and thrilling serials that are awaiting publication in this best of all story papers. If the reader is a boy or girl and would like one of our King Cameras free, or if you are a woman reader and would like six standard patterns without cost, please note the announcement of these premiums on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Doctor Carnott's Patient.

By ALMA SCRIVEN.

I am the pastor of a well-attended church located near a large city, and I think I may truly say that no one who appeals to me for pity appeals in vain.

A short time ago I was visiting an intimate female friend at Doctor Carnott's large asylum, a short distance from my Glibbery; but, unfortunately, she received my words of counsel with maniacal derision.

I was hurrying down the corridor, out of which opened the sitting-rooms of the patients, trusting that I should not be late for an engagement at the house of a lady member of my congregation, when, suddenly, one of the doors opened, and a young and good-looking lady came out, and met me face to face.

I recognized her at once as an old friend, whom, since her marriage, some years previously, I had seen nothing of. When I knew her, she was a bright, clever girl, and though I remembered that she had not always treated me with the respect to which I am accustomed, I was truly concerned to see her in her present position.

Before I could speak, she addressed me eagerly.

"Mr. Escombe," she said, holding out her hand, "I saw you arrive. I should be so much obliged if I could have a few words alone with you."

I hesitated.

The young doctor on the staff of the establishment, who was accompanying me, interposed.

"We are in a hurry, Mrs. Thorne," he said; "you had better stay quietly in your room."

"I think Mr. Escombe will spare me a few minutes," she replied, smiling, but with her eyes fixed anxiously on mine; "we are very old friends."

"I am happy to meet you again," I said, and, as her evident eagerness touched me, I added: "I shall be delighted to speak alone with you for a few minutes."

The young doctor looked doubtful, and the nurse, who was seated in the room, still more so; but at length, with the respect which my calling naturally inspires, they acceded to my wishes.

The room looked pretty and neat; there were flowers here and there, and the morning papers lay open on the table.

We sat down, and for a few moments Mrs. Thorne buried her face in her hands.

"Well," I said gently.

"I was thanking God for this opportunity," she said simply, "and praying that I might make the most of it."

She paused and appeared to be thinking; then, as I made some movement, she looked up, and continued, in an impassioned manner:

"You don't know what it is to have to speak to you across the barrier made by my supposed insanity. How am I to make you realize that what I am going to tell you is not the illusion of a diseased mind?"

"Come, dear Mrs. Thorne," I said, good-humoredly, "you must be quite calm, or I shall be sorry I have granted your request."

She rose to her feet.

"Do I look demented?" she asked.

I made no answer. Her appearance and manner indicated mental ease and self-possession.

She continued more quietly:

"Whether you believe me or not, let me tell you my story."

"Pray tell me whatever you like," I said.

"I will try to be as concise as possible," she replied, seating herself again. "You know that previous to my marriage I did a good deal at journalism and writing generally. What you did not know—in fact, no one knew—was that I made a considerable amount of money by it, which, as I had a good allowance, I did not spend. I entrusted it to a friend, a Mr. Dennis, to invest for me, letting the interest accumulate. When I married, I told my husband all about it. This money was not, of course, settled in any way.

"Two years passed, during which time I was bitterly disillusioned as to my husband's character. He was very extravagant, and when our honeymoon was over, left me almost entirely to myself. I had then been married about a year. After my child was born, I took to writing again. I published a novel anonymously—you may have read it—'Ethel's Disappointment'? No? Well, at any rate, it appealed to a large class of readers, and I was well paid for it. This money I also put into Mr. Dennis' hands.

"One day I received a letter from Mr. Dennis, telling me that he had heard from my husband, demanding in my name that my money should be given into his care. He added that he did not feel justified in parting with it without hearing direct from me.

"I was very indignant, and told my husband that this money was for my child, and that he should never touch a dollar of it. I am not going to tell of all the measures he took to enforce his request"—her face seemed to whiten as she spoke; "however, I did not yield. I told Mr. Dennis on no account to part with the money except by my express desire.

"A few days after this, I received another letter from him, saying that, 'in accordance with my husband's request,' he had transferred my shares, etc., to my husband's name.

"I asked my husband the meaning of this. He laughed, and told me not to make a fuss. I declared that I would go to my brother, and ask him to take proceedings for the recovery of the money. At this, he turned rather pale, and said: 'I advise you not to do that.' I said: 'Unless the transfers are in my hands today, that is what I shall do.' And my husband knew that I meant it.

"A friend of his, a Doctor Ellerton, was dining with us that evening."

"Ellerton?" I broke in. "Doctor James Ellerton?"

"Yes," she answered, "do you know him?"

I did, indeed, by repute; his name was at that very time figuring very unfavorably in a notorious scandal in the daily papers.

"After dinner," she continued, "I heard the door-bell. My husband said to me, in a low voice: 'This is a stock-broker, come to settle with us how we shall invest the money.' I replied: 'You know I will have nothing to do with this matter.'

"'You had better tell him so, then,' my husband replied, which I determined to do.

"The servant showed a gentleman into the room without announcing him by name. I was feeling rather excited at the time, and as soon as I had greeted him I told him that my husband was mistaken in thinking that I had any money that I wished him to dispose of. To my intense astonishment, he sat beside me and felt my pulse.

"I then asked him plainly who he was.

"'This is Doctor Acroyd, dear,' my husband said gently; 'I have been anxious about your health lately.'

"I said that I felt perfectly well, and soon after both the doctors left the house.

"Then my husband came closer to me.

"'Do you understand?' he said. 'Doctor Acroyd is a specialist in nervous diseases. I have told him that you are suffering from a delusion about a sum of money, of which you may remember, no one knows the existence except ourselves and Mr. Dennis, with whom you will hold no further communication. Unless you consent to let matters remain as they are, tomorrow you will be removed to a sanitarium.'

"I simply laughed. I did not believe that a sane person could be imprisoned for no crime.

"The next morning I discovered that I was locked in bedroom. No notice was taken of my bell until my husband came and told me that Doctor Acroyd and Doctor Ellerton were there. I felt that the matter was serious; but thought it better to make no disturbance, but simply to appeal to Doctor Acroyd to test the truth about the money. As soon as I mentioned the word 'money,' I saw him exchange glances with my husband. Soon thereafter I was brought here, and—here I am still."

Mrs. Thorne ceased speaking.

"Has your brother never been to see you?" I asked in consternation.

"No one but my husband has visited me," she replied.

I wiped my brow. Was it possible that her brute of a husband, assisted by a fool—for thus I mentally designated Doctor Acroyd—and a scoundrel, who was doubtless well paid for it, could have done this woman so vile a wrong?

"But—but the magistrate—the commissioners?" I stammered.

"Until today," she replied, quietly, "no one has done me the kindness to listen to my story."

I rose. "Is this true?" I asked solemnly.

"Will you test its truth?" she eagerly asked. "I don't ask you to believe my word; but will you go to Mr. Dennis, number forty-three Grabot Street, and see if he corroborates my story? I will give you a note for him."

"Why have you never told Doctor Carnott?" I asked suddenly.

"I tried when I first came, and only got as far as the word 'money,' when he left me. Since then I have only tried to act in a manner that should convince him of my sanity. Several times he has told me that he considered my cure practically complete, but always before I could be released my husband has seen me alone, and—and I don't know what he tells them about me, but there is no further word about my cure, Mr. Escombe," and her voice broke. "I have not seen my child for two years."

"Your child shall be in your arms tomorrow," I said quietly.

"You believe me?" she cried, rising and coming toward me with her hands outstretched. "Thank God!"

Just then I heard a step in the passage. Mrs. Thorne turned her head, and—in another moment an absolutely demoniacal yell rang through the room!

I was hurled against the wall: Mrs. Thorne, her face distorted beyond recognition, had seized me by the throat with both hands. I struggled, but I was almost helpless, and I felt her teeth almost meeting in my cheek. Seven devils might have possessed the woman!

I managed to utter a yell, and then I heard a rush of feet down the passage. In another moment the door burst open, and the raving, writhing, foaming maniac was torn from me!

"I am exceedingly sorry for this, Mr. Escombe," Doctor Carnott said to me a few minutes later, while I was trying to compose myself. "That fool of a nurse had no business to leave you alone with her. Still, she has been very quiet lately. Did you see any signs of the attack coming on?"

"H'm! I—er—I thought it might be a very serious case!" I said, and departed as hastily as possible.

Since then I have not visited a lunatic asylum!

BACK TO PULPIT

What Food Did for a Clergyman.

A minister of Elizabethtown tells how Grape-Nuts food brought him back to his pulpit: "Some 5 years ago I had an attack of what seemed to be La Grippe which left me in a complete state of collapse and I suffered for some time with nervous prostration. My appetite failed, I lost flesh till I was a mere skeleton, life was a burden to me, I lost interest in everything and almost in everybody save my precious wife.

"Then on the recommendation of some friends I began to use Grape-Nuts food. At that time I was a miserable skeleton, without appetite and hardly able to walk across the room; had ugly dreams at night, no disposition to entertain or be entertained and began to shun society.

"I finally gave up the regular ministry, indeed I could not collect my thoughts on any subject, and became almost a hermit. After I had been using the Grape-Nuts food for a short time I discovergd that I was taking on new life and my appetite began to improve; I began to sleep better and my weight increased steadily; I had lost some 50 pounds but under the new food regime I have regained almost my former weight and have greatly improved in every way.

"I feel that I owe much to Grape-Nuts and can truly recommend the food to all who require a powerful rebuilding agent delicious to taste and always welcome." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. A true natural road to regain health, or hold it, is by use of a dish of Grape-Nuts and cream morning and night. Or have the food made into some of the many delicious dishes given in the little recipe book found in pkgs.

Ten days' trial of Grape-Nuts helps many. "There's a reason."

Look in pkgs. for a copy of the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville."

Worthy of His Fee.

David B. Henderson's early professional experiences were not materially different from those of most young lawyers.

Finally he was retained in an estate case which involved large interests. The future speaker was mighty hard up, and he was seriously thinking of asking the heirs to pay his bill, which he had never rendered.

He was meditating whether to charge them $200 or $300, when one of the heirs, representing them all, stepped briskly into his office and taking out a roll of $500 bills, said: "Mr. Henderson, I want to pay your bill," and commenced laying down these $500 bills until he had $2,500 before the astonished young lawyer.

Looking up at Mr. Henderson, the heir said: "Is that enough?"

And the lawyer, with that self-possession which subsequently made him famous, calmly said, "Peel off another one and we will call it square.

What He Needed.

"I'm going to get married," he said, as he placed a hand as large as a Dutch cheese upon the counter, "and I want a wedding cake."

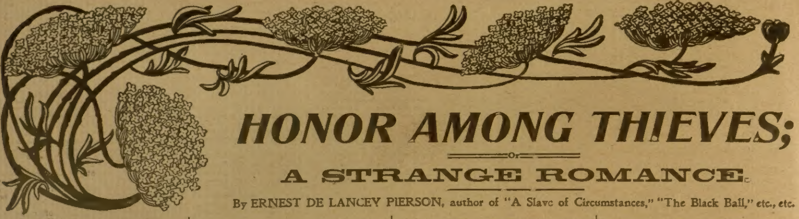
"It is customary nowadays," said the pretty confectioner's assistant, "to have the materials of the cake harmonize with the calling of the bridegroom. For a musician we have an oat cake; for a man who has no calling and lives upon his friends, the sponge cake; for a newspaper paragrapher, spice cake, and so on. What is your calling, please?"

"I'm a pugilist."

"Then you'll want a pound cake."

* * *

Nobody but the teacher of elocution expects others to have a say in his affairs.



HONOR AMONG THIEVES;

Or

A STRANGE ROMANCE.

By ERNEST DE LANCEY PIERSON, author of "A Slave of Circumstances," "The Black Ball," etc., etc.

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CHAPTER IV.

DOCTOR MORDECAI'S PROTECTION.

"A murder you say and in this house?" exclaimed Doctor Mordecai, as he raised his long white hands with a gesture of horror. "I can hardly believe such a thing possible in this peaceful habitation."

There were two visitors, a young man whom Renwood recognized as the fellow who ran the elevator, who looked pale and ill, and in direct contrast a burly red-faced policeman. From his strange hiding place he had a good view of the room and its occupants, for the glass eyes of the animal in whose body he was concealed offered convenient peep holes.

"You think that the young artist on the top floor, where the woman was found might be able to tell something about the tragedy?" said the doctor, raising his voice intentionally. Renwood could not make out what was said in reply.

"And you found his room unlocked, and everything in confusion, things flung here and there as if there had been a shindy? Well, well, that certainly does look bad! I dare say Mr. Renwood will be able to explain things as soon as he returns. She worked for him as a model and you found several pictures of her in the room, one partly finished on the easel? Still, you must not lose your head and set him down as guilty. He'll clear himself, never fear, as soon as he gets back."

Then followed some mumbling talk from the visitors that the half suffocated artist could not distinguish.

"You think that perhaps the criminal might have concealed himself in the building?" continued Mordecai, raising his voice again. "Well I'm sure he didn't slip in here or I should have known about it. But just to satisfy you, you are welcome to look around the premises, even if you haven't a search warrant it will save trouble. I have some very excellent brandy here," pointing to a decanter and glasses on a tabourette nearby. "Perhaps it might quicken your wits in this investigation if you were to take a wee nip. The young man there looks as if he needed something bracing."

"And small wonder," returned the policeman as he filled his glass and swallowed it at a gulp. "Sure, he was poisoned so he was, and ain't well over it yet, though I guess I heaved more'n a bucket of water over him. Spake up to the gentleman, Jimmy," turning to the other, who having swallowed a stiff horn of the beverage showed signs of reviving. "Tell him how ye was doped, and what part you played in this black business."

"Yes, I should be glad to hear," said the doctor. "Sit you down gentlemen and help yourself to the bottle when you feel like it. Let us get at the bottom of this affair, for there is no knowing but what I might be able to help you."

"Go on, Jimmy, go on," urged the policeman, whose red face had grown rosier as a result of his potations.

The young elevator man began his story. "There ain't much to tell," he said. "We shut down here at twelve, ye mind, and it was near that time when this painter feller comes in with the gerl we found in the elevator. I carries 'em up all right and brings the empty car down, and sits in the hall to wait till it was twelve. It might be that I dozed a bit, but when I opened me eyes the lights was out. I got up to find out what the trouble was when a man come up from behind, his arm went around me neck and there was a handkerchief in the hand, and I guess it was loaded with dope, for a few whiffs of it set me leery and a few more knocked me out. That's all I knows on until the copper here nigh drowned me with a pail o' water."

"I found him sittin' with his head on his chist on a chair by the shaft, and the elevator nowheres to be seen," said the policemen continuing the story.

"So," muttered the doctor as he rubbed his nose reflectively, "and you didn't get a view of the person who put you to sleep!" turning to the elevator man.

"Is it likely when it was blacker'n a black cat's pocket, and him behind me all the time? I was wanted out o' the way, ye see, so this bad business could be finished. Them two was the last I took up, and they never come down unless it was while I was dozin'. The front door was locked an' on'y some'un that lived here or had stolen a key could ha' got in, an' there ye are."

He paused to catch his breath after this outburst and then hastened to say:

"Now mebbe you wonder why we feel sure that this here painter feller done the trick. Wal, look at that now," and he took a scrap of cloth out of his pocket and spread it out on his knee. "That," said he, "was a bit I tore off the overcoat of the party that done me up in the hall."

A slight exclamation from the far end of the room caused the policeman and his companion to start violently. The doctor who knew perfectly from whence this sound proceeded was calm as ever.

"What's that?" asked the policeman, peering in the direction of the sound suspiciously.

"Oh, my servant sleeps over in that part of the house. I suppose he's just getting up," said Mordecai carelessly, but his companions did not notice the warning look he cast towards a certain part of the room and even if they had, they would not have understood its meaning.

"Push the bottle about gentleman. I guess you are both a little unnerved through this dreadful business, and that is hardly to be wondered at."

The pair accepted the invitation readily, and forgot at once the strange sound that had startled them.

Doctor Mordecai was meanwhile examining the strip of cloth attentively. It was a brown and blue check of some woolly material and rather conspicuous.

"Well," he asked the elevator man "what about this?"

"Oh, nuthin'; on'y the picture man wore a coat like that an' ye can see fer yerself that it ain't no common goods."

"You are sure he had a coat of this kind?"

"Oh, say," protested the other, "I knows the folks that come and go in this house from hats to heels. Guess you never ran a elevator an' had nuthin' half the time to do but watch folks comin' in an' goin' out. I guess I could furnish a complete list of the wardrobe o' the parties that hang out here, even down to their shoe laces an' not make no mistake. Yessir. That come offen the painter's coat all right. He wore the identical article two week ago today or I'm a liar."

Again the strange sound that had startled them before came from a distant part of the room. The doctor's face became frowning.

"I'll just see what's the matter with that infernal servant of mine that he makes these sounds," said the doctor as he rose. "Guess he don't feel well this morning. Wait here, gentlemen, and I'll return in a moment."

"Keep quiet man," he whispered as he passed the grim figure of the bear and then disappeared into the adjoining room.

Renwood in his hiding place was ready enough to follow this advice, but the last cry had been wrung from him, when he realized how the net of circumstances was being slowly woven to trap him.

"Now then, gentlemen, if you would like to have a look around the premises to see if the criminal is in hiding here, why I am at your service to show you the way," said the doctor appearing in the doorway.

"I—I guess I might as well guard the hall door an' see he don't git out while you's is lookin'," said the young elevator man eagerly.

"Oh, very well, but don't do him no hurt if ye see him," returned the policeman who was in a genial mood. Then as the young man vanished he followed the doctor into the adjoining room.

It seemed to Renwood, almost stifled in his hiding place, that they were gone for hours and that he could not stand it much longer there. He was delighted enough when the pair came into view again, but he received a momentary shock when the policeman on whom the old brandy had begun to take effect paused before the figure of the bear and said as he cocked his eye towards it:

"Now if that there critter was holler what a fine place it would be for a party to hide hisself in when wanted," and he circled around it rather unsteadily, tapping the sides playfully until Renwood was in an agony of apprehension.

"I shouldn't want'er go to bed in a room with such a beast," said the policeman, "but I guess yer used to his sereiety."

The doctor made some laughing remark in reply and then they sauntered towards the hall door.

"Come again if you want to ask me anything. And let me know what progress you make in this business."

Doctor Mordecai closed the door. There was the sound of bolts pushed into place, and a moment later a light flashed in on Renwood and he stumbled out into the other's arms.

"Oh, come, are you as bad as that! Brace up, me boy, for you will need all your strength and a level head to breast the tide that seems to be setting mighty strong against you."

He supported the young man to a seat on a divan and pressed him to take a glass of wine and a biscuit.

"Now then," he said briskly, when he saw that the artist had in a measure recovered from the effects of his incarceration. "I suppose that it was the appearance of that bit of cloth on the scene that caused the outcry?"

"Yes, it was."

"Humph! If we had had to deal with any but a pair of such stupid louts I'm afraid the fat would have been all in the fire. I might of course have kept them out, since they had no right to invade my home without a warrant, but I thought it best to appear only too willing they should examine the premises. Sooner or later owing to this business I should have a call. I shall have more ere long, and the next visitors may not be such fools as this pair. Now this bit of cloth is going to give [illegible] trouble."

"I suppose so," replied Renwood dully, as he looked around the room like a man who is only half awake after an unpleasant dream.

"And this is a bit of your coat, you say, that the fellow had?"

"Why, yes, to be sure. But it was this way. This woman, this model, you see, was always begging, and she could make such a poor mouth——"

"It seems to me that she had a very pretty mouth. Perhaps that helped her," said the doctor with cynical jocularity.

"Well, she certainly had persuasive ways about her, and could bleed a man to death if his reason didn't come to the rescue. She had poor relations and she was always begging for them, too. That particular coat she worried me into giving her for one of these beggarly connections. For all I know she wanted to sell it, for she never mentioned these relations unless she wanted to get something out of me."

"Ah, yes, I see. But then unfortunately she is dead. Very much so, and you would have great trouble in proving that she was given that garment. A man in a hole like that in which you find yourself would of course put up some such story," and he eyed the young painter with a quizzical look.

"Why—why, I believe you still have doubts of my innocence," protested the other indignantly.

The doctor made a gesture of deprecation. "What does it matter to me whether you are innocent or guilty?" he said. "My interest in you does not rest on one or the other. It pleases me to help you out of your troubles and I believe they will prove formidable ones. However, I think we shall win out in the end. That is unless you lose your head and spoil everything."

"I am not sure but the best thing I could do would be to give myself up and tell my own story,' said Renwood calmly.

"Eh, what—what?" gasped the doctor. "Don't be such a fool."

"But my running away. It will be like a confession of guilt."

"Why, man, they have enough to hang you already, and this is only the beginning. You quarreled with this woman? You wanted to get rid of her. And then this piece of cloth. Nothing would save you unless the man who is guilty gave himself up, which is unlikely. That is if there is another responsible for the deed. There, there!" soothingly, as Renwood was on his feet again. "I forgot! Of course, my boy, you are innocent of this business as a babe unborn."

Renwood dropped back in his seat. He was not at all convinced that the doctor believed in his innocence. Well, for the present it would not do to anger him. What a formidable witness Doctor Mordecai would prove against him. He it was, who found him shut up in the elevator with the murdered woman, and his hands stained with blood. He looked down at his fingers and shuddered to find that they were still splashed with red here and there.

"Yes, I see," broke in the doctor noticing the movement. "You must get rid of those stains, and at once. Come with me," and he led the young man into an adjoining room and superintended the work of removing the stains.

"Wait here a moment. I have a word to say to Sheilm, that's my brown servant." When he returned he was dressed to go out.

"I am off now. You will remain here. I shall not return until night. My man will not let anyone in while I am gone. If anyone should try to force himself in it will be over a brown body. You know what to do—where to hide. Amuse yourself while you can, when I am gone. Books there are in plenty, and things to eat. I shall find out what is being done about this business, what steps have been taken. I shall also find a place to conceal you safer than this. You are not safe here, and the next visitors will not be so careless as the last. Keep a clear head, do nothing rash," and he strode through the doorway and disappeared.

Doctor Mordecai returned early in the evening. An hour later he came out of his rooms accompanied by an oriental looking man with a brownish skin and wearing a scarlet fez. The lower part of his face was muffled in a gay silk handkerchief.

"My servant's got one of his infernal sore throats again," growled the doctor to the elevator runner. "He never can get used to the climate, poor devil!"

As they stepped out in the hall a small, hatchet-faced man confronted them with bright eyes and a clerical cut to his clothes.

"Well, sir? Well?" asked Mordecai irritably. "Please allow me to pass!" The stranger stepped aside.

"Was—was that a policeman in plain clothes?" asked Renwood as they got into the carriage in waiting. He was glad his brown stained skin had hidden his pallor from the little man.

"Worse! That little imp is the detective Sam Pendrick," grumbled the old doctor. "Ah, my boy, I got you out of that building none too soon. Did you notice how he stared at you. I believe a little longer inspection and he would have pierced your disguise. That little devil can see further than any man through a stone wall. Lord help the man he gets after."

Long after the carriage had lost sight of the flat building Doctor Mordecai was anxiously peering through the glass in the back of carriage as if he feared that they were being followed.

CHAPTER V.

THE VEILED VISITOR

Late on the morning of the murder, Sam Pendrick, formerly of the secret service, and who was still occasionally called on by the Police Department in difficult cases, had finished his frugal breakfast of rolls and coffee, sat before his desk running over a pile of morning papers that lay before him. The insignificant little man, who had done some big things in his time, had evidently found something in the news of the day to interest him, for he fingered the papers excitedly, as his eyes scanned the pages so that he did not hear the ring of his bell repeated more than once. When a sharp knock sounded on the door of his shabby study he jumped up impatiently, fastened his loose flowing dressing gown together, and, after a preliminary peep at the visitor in the hall before opening, admitted a heavily veiled lady in black, who seemed to be in a high state of nervous perturbation.

"Is Mr. Pendrick in?" she asked.

"I am he," replied the little man with a bow.

"You?" in a voice that expressed at once disappointment and astonishment.

The detective smiled good naturedly. It was not by any means the first time that prospective clients had been disappointed in his appearance when they met him face to face. He was quite used to that sort of thing.

"I am sorry that I don't come up to your expectations," he said blandly, "but I assure you that I am the genuine article, beware of all imitators. Will you be seated, for I presume you came here to see me on business?" and he advanced a chair into which the lady sank wearily.

"I would like to ask if you would be able to do some work for me at present. Something that may take up all your time?"

"I am not engaged on anything of importance at present, but there is no telling when I may jump into the arena," and he cast a look at the pile of papers on the desk which he had been reading before the arrival of his visitor.

"Then you are open to an engagement?"

"That depends."

"How depends?" she asked impatiently.

"I have worked hard all my life, I have made enough to live modestly without doing a stroke, so now I only tackle cases that interest me."

"Oh, I see," in a disappointed voice. "I did not know that or I should not have——"

"Was it about that business up town? The murder of the model found in the elevator?"

The lady started.

"How did you guess it? How?"

"Oh, it was only a chance shot, that's all. You see I have just been reading about that matter," nodding towards the pile of papers, "and I was highly interested, it stirred my old fighting blood."

"I am glad to hear you say that. For it was about that affair that I wanted to engage your services."

"Then you have come to the right shop madam. If the terms are suitable, and I am not greedy when a case interests me, we may do business together."

"Of course I don't want to appear in the matter."

"That is not necessary."

"If you have read the account that I read in the paper you have seen it hinted that a young man—a certain artist, Gilbert Renwood who has disappeared, may have something to do with this dreadful business."

"Yes, I read that."

"Well,' she hurried on, "he is innocent, of course, and was perhaps very wise to keep out of the way. It is more than likely that a great deal of evidence will be piled up against him, but don't let that blind you to the truth, that he is innocent."

"Ah, are you quite sure——"

"Quite so," she replied with some indignation. "Now, what I want you to do is to find the real criminal. Don't let any suspicions that this young man is guilty divert you from the right track."

The detective made a wry face, opened his lips to speak and then closed them again quickly. What was the use of arguing with this young lady who was probably in love with the artist.

"I don't know what is paid for this sort of work," she hurried on, taking a purse out of her pocket and extracting two banknotes which she laid on the edge of the desk. "There is two hundred dollars as a retainer, and you can call for what is necessary after you think you have worked that out."

"Ah, but I haven't agreed to take charge of this yet," he said rubbing his chin, thoughtfully. "You evidently don't want me to discover incriminating evidence against this Mr. Renwood."

"Just put him out of your mind for the present and look for the guilty one in another direction."

Pendrick rose and paced up and down the room for some moments in deep thought, while the young woman followed his movements anxiously.

"I will engage in this work on one condition," he said as he paused beside her chair. "And that is that I shall be privileged to throw up the job as soon as I am convinced that this young man is guilty."

"With all my heart," she exclaimed delightedly. "You will soon find that he is entirely innocent and that the evidence that may appear against him will sink of its own weight out of sight."

"I'm sure I hope so for your sake," replied the detective dryly.

"Then so far we are agreed. And the retainer, is it enough?"

"Quite enough. We won't quarrel on that score."

"You will enter upon the work at once?"

"As soon as I can change my clothes."

"Good! I must see you tonight to learn what you have discovered," at the same time fixing the hour and place of meeting.

So matters were arranged, and it was only after the lady had been ushered out and he found himself alone that he remembered that he had forgotten to ask her, her name. The only evidence of her personality was a handkerchief which his visitor had left on the floor. It was a dainty lace affair with the initials "F. G." embroidered in one corner.

"After all, I think I know who she is. Certainly. Oh, yes," he mused as he thrust the handkerchief in his pocket. "Not that it matters much. And now for work," flinging off his dressing gown, and giving it a pitch over the partition into the next room.

After a month of idleness he was eager to enter the lists again. Here was a pretty problem after his own heart. He would gladly have engaged in its solution without pay, just to keep his hand in, but with a liberal backer the affair was doubly interesting. Pendrick threw himself into the business heart and soul. He spent most of the day there.

When he entered the artist's studio on the top floor he thought there was no one there, but a sound like the gasping of the exhaust-pipe of a donkey-engine drew him to a corner of the room where he found a fat man on his knees before an open trunk.

The latter stumbled to his feet at the sound of steps and turned around a very red and ill-natured face.

"Ho, what brings you here?" he grunted. "Is it from headquarters? As if there wasn't enough reg'ler men to handle a little job like this!"

"Find it easy, eh, Mr. Bucket?" replied the detective good naturedly. "Then you'll get plenty of honor without much work. No, I've not come to divide the honors with you. I'm working independently, perhaps just to amuse myself. Whatever I may happen to light on I'll place at your service and free of charge."

Mr. Bucket's round red face expanded in a grin.

"Oh, if ye mean that, all right. But I didn't want you to swipe all the laurels in this here affair. You don't need 'em in your business and I do."

"Well, which way does the wind blow?" asked Pendrick, glad that he had established cordial relations with the man who might be of service to him.

"Well, it pints direct to the feller—the dauber that lives in this joint," said Mr. Bucket. "Quarreled with the gal last night. There's her picter on the easel," pointing a fat hand to a half finished portrait of a dancing girl that stood there.

Pendrick went forward and examined the picture attentively. He grew thoughtful. Somewhere he had seen that woman before.

"Yas," droned on Mr. Bucket, "'nother woman in the case. Some high-flier he wanted to marry. Thisn' I suppose wouldn't have it nohow. Had to get rid of her o' course. Found he had a grip half packed ready to skip. Blood marks on the linin'. Went off without it. I believe this chap had murder on the brain for some time. Jest look at that," and he held up a sketch in crayon which he had fished out of the open trunk.

It showed a woman lying on the floor of a room very much like that in which they were standing. She bore a striking resemblance, too, to the woman pictured on the easel. There was a terrible wound at her throat, and nearby lay a curious dagger, the handle made of two twisted snakes. Off in the shadows the pale face and nothing more of a man was seen as if suspended in the air. There was a power in the composition, it moved even the detective.

"There's several more pictures like this in the trunk," said Mr. Bucket, "on'y they ain't worked out so well. Don't that show that this artist feller was havin' the murder in his mind all the time?"

To Pendrick it looked that way, too, but then he was not so eager to gather evidence against the artist. It certainly looked black for his client as Mr. Bucket furnished still more reasons for believing the artist guilty.

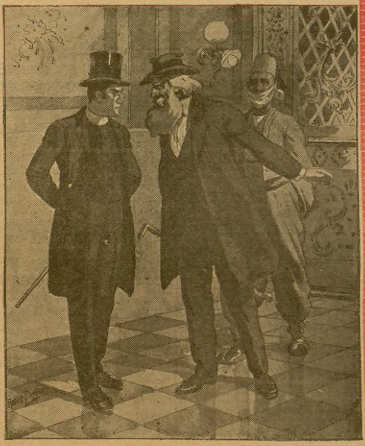
"But here," said that worthy, as a crowning touch to this tale as he drew a package carefully out of his coat pocket. "Here we have the king pin crusher," and he slowly undid the wrappings revealing a glittering dagger with an etched blade somewhat discolored with rust or something in spots. The handle was of silver representing two serpents, their tails twisted, the heads meeting at the hilt.

"That!" said Mr. Bucket, "that skewer, which looks to be of Eyetalian origin, is exactly like to the one in the picture," tapping the sketch he still held in his hand. "I picked it up in the hall, where it must ha' been dropped by the murderer. Eh, don't things move along, wheels or not?"

"It would seem so," muttered Pendrick, as he took the dagger and examined it. Really it would not be easy for him to turn from all this evidence against the artist and look another way for the murderer!

Mr. Bucket, rather disappointed in the effect he had hoped to produce, set down the other's silence to jealousy. Pendrick felt bad because he had not made all these damning discoveries himself! It was something to be able to get ahead of a man of Pendrick's reputation.

"I'm goin' to keep this knife and other things for evidence," said Bucket, "along of a blood-stained handkerchief I found behind this trunk. But Lor'! I guess I got enough now to convict the pope o' Rome. Don't look so downhearted, old boy," patting Pendrick patronizingly on the shoulder. "You are arrived a day too late for the fair, but what of it? You've earned your bays long ago. Let us pore devils have a few now and then to flavor our humble stews. Now I'm goin' off to see ef any news has been had o' this gent. I telegraphed to all boat landings and stations soon as I got here. A general alarm, I guess follered, and unless that villain is mighty sharp, we'll net him 'fore night. So long, old man," and Mr. Bucket, very proud of himself, swaggered out, leaving Pendrick staring at the fancy portrait of the victim of the tragedy who smiled at him from the easel.



"Please allow me to pass?"

"It won't be possible for me to take that young woman's money much longer," he muttered, "unless I receive a light from some unexpected source. And she seemed so deadly earnest in her belief in his innocence! Well, men have wriggled out of tighter nets than this they are setting for him, but his disappearance was a bad move. A very bad move. As I could inform that misguided young man if I were to meet him," and he moved here and there about the room, examining the walls, the furniture, the hanging cabinets and their contents, the portfolios of sketches. In the latter he came again on replicas or studies of the murder scene Bucket had shown him with such cold blooded glee.

"Poor girl," muttered Pendrick, as he examined these, but whether he said this out of sympathy for the victim or the young woman who had engaged his services was undecided.

While the studio proper was a disordered, barn-like place, dusty and forlorn, the bedroom partitioned off in one corner displayed some taste and even luxury. The door stood open so the detective had no trouble in finding his way in. There was a big bed richly carved by the window, with a canopy of ribbed silk embroidered with flowers. Some quaint chairs, no two alike, stood about and a queer pulpit desk. It was piled with bits of paper, but he found nothing to interest him among them as he shuffled them over.

The waste basket, or the bronze jar that served as such, yielded something. It was a torn bit of a letter. The writing must be Renwood's since it was in the same hand as that on a number of papers on the top of the desk. This seemed to have been written in feverish haste, as if the hand that wielded the pen was trembling with excitement. This is what he read:

"Marie: I will not see you again either here or elsewhere. There is no more to be said. Do you want to ruin my life? I have suffered more from you than I can bear. Take care—even the mildest of men may be driven to desperation. And you——"

Here the line broke off abruptly. The straggling handwriting showed the writer to be laboring under intense mental excitement.

This woman stood in the way of his marriage perhaps. He had tried to break with her, and she still pursued him. Perhaps the persecution had become unbearable, and the worm had turned. But pshaw! Was he not paid to believe that Renwood was innocent? Why should these tormenting evidences of his guilt pop up at every turn!

He left the room in a thoughtful mood. Perhaps Mr. Bucket was not altogether wrong in saying that there was already enough evidence on hand to hang the man. Where was he to look for a clue that would lead him away from the present damning facts? Where indeed?

As he went out the door he saw something white fluttering on the portiere, that hung across the doorway leading to the studio. It was a woman's handkerchief caught in the heavy metal embroidery. He picked it off and carried it into the studio's brighter light.

"Well, well!" he ejaculated, "I have seen something like this and not so long ago."

He took out of his pocket the dainty bit of cambric and lace his veiled visitor had dropped in his office an hour before. Yes, they were exactly alike even to the initials, "F. G." in the corner.

Pendrick gave a long whistle and then cast a quick look around him as if to be sure that he alone had made this discovery.

"So she has paid a visit here lately, my lady in black! She might have encountered the model here with her lover. What! Am I going to suspect my lady of the veil as guilty in order to clear him! Well, stranger things have happened," and he returned to his work shaking his head omniously.

Here was an affair, that was either no mystery at all, or an enigma it would take desperate work to solve.

CHAPTER VI.

HIDE AND SEEK.

"A queer pair that," remarked Sam Pendrick to the elevator man as Mordecai and his supposed servant passed through the door that night.

"The doctor ain't such a bad sort as ye might think," replied the other with the memories of Mordecai's hospitality of the morning still fresh. "As fer the yaller feller; well, I guess he's harmless enough. He don't open his mouth once a month, and would give me the jumps if I had to live in the same rooms with him," and he proceeded to tell a long story about the doctor and his companion, embellished with some wholly original matter. Since Mr. James Wiggins came to occupy the centre of the stage in this tragic affair he felt that it became one of his prominence to do what he could to maintain his position. So the reporters, who had besieged the house ever since news of the murder had been noised abroad, could not complain that they had not been furnished with "copy." Mr. Wiggins having spent a meditative life did not send them away empty handed.

Sam Pendrick, who had gauged the fellow pretty thoroughly, broke away from the young man's eloquence and hurried into the street. He was in time to see the carriage containing the doctor and his dark companion just swinging round the corner.

"That servant of his looked kind o' suspicious," he meditated; "that hair he wore did not exactly fit the complexion. I must make the acquaintance of this interesting doctor. It might be that he knows something about this business."

Then an idea seemed to strike him and he passed up the steps of the flats again.

"Where are Doctor Mordecai's rooms located?" he asked Wiggins who admitted him.

"Right under the studio of that villain. Shall I take ye up?"

"Oh, I just wanted to know where it was. I'm going to roam around awhile before I go home."

Mr. Wiggins was about to offer his services to accompany the detective, when he was called away by a ring at the door, and when he got back Pendrick was half way up the marble stairs.

He thought it would be interesting if he could get a peep into the doctor's rooms while the latter was away. He did not want to break into the place. He merely wanted to satisfy himself that the flat was really empty. How he was going to satisfy his curiosity he was not sure when he arrived on the floor where the doctor's apartments were located. There was a transom over the door but it was obscured by a heavy curtain. He touched the button absent-mindedly and was not in the least surprised that no one came in response to his ring.

"There ought to be some way of getting into this shop from the rear," he grumbled to himself, looking around him. "Or at least catching a glimpse of the interior."

At the end of the hall there was a window that was used for ventilation and which now stood partly raised. It also opened on a fire escape as he found when he reached it.

Pendrick clambered out on the iron slats and looked in the direction of the doctor's windows. There were two of these and both dark with curtains drawn.

How was he going to find if there was any person moving about behind those curtains? Perhaps if he approached the position from a different point of view some means might suggest itself. He mounted the fire escape which led to the roof, and wondered how he should set about finding out if the doctor's flat was occupied.

It was while he was wandering up and down, trying to think out a way that he stumbled over a fragment of rope, and a plan was at once suggested. It was so simple, that he wondered why he had not thought of it before. He was simply going to play the tic-tac trick of his boyhood days, only this time in a way that was much more reprehensible.

Pendrick chuckled as he selected a loose brick lying near the chimney and attached it firmly to the end of the rope he had found. There was just enough of this to reach the window of the doctor's flat.

"Guess this'll draw the beast out of his hole," he muttered. "That is if there is anyone there."

He lay down flat on his stomach on the edge of the roof, and dangled the rope with the brick at the end over the window, then with an outward swing it returned, and there was the sound of shattered glass, followed, Pendrick thought, by a cry.

He drew up the rope quickly out of sight and wriggled back just far enough so that he could look down over the edge of the roof.

"That ought to fetch 'em if anything can."

It did. As he lay there in that uncomfortable attitude, a head was thrust out from the window below, probably through the glass he had so ruthlessly shattered. It was a head surmounted by a gay colored handkerchief twisted in a turban shape, and some straight locks of hair straggled from beneath it.

As Pendrick slipped back out of sight he had a brief glimpse of a dark face, and a fine, rather large nose.

"He looks like the real article," said the detective to himself as he rose from his cramped position and dusted the dirt from his clothes. "Now who then was the other fellow?"

He had a vague suspicion who the other might be but it gave him no satisfaction now. If he had only known, he might have followed Mordecai and his companion and learned more. What object had the doctor in protecting the assassin? For who else could the disguised person be who had left the house in his company?

There should not have been so much mystery surrounding the murder of a poor and aparently penniless model. He must have a heart to heart talk with this doctor, who would not be likely to run away—just yet.

Since he could hope to learn nothing more here tonight, but well satisfied with what he had done, Pendrick slipped down the fire escape, climbed in the window, and went down the stairs into the street.

Crossing the park at a brisk pace, he entered a quiet thoroughfare lined with palatial houses and stood for a moment looking up at one of the most imposing of the lot on the opposite side of the way.

This mansion which was crowded forward as if elbowing its less pretentious neighbors out of the way, displayed only one lighted window on the second floor. The curtain was down, but from where he stood Pendrick could catch a glimpse of a shadow passing across it now and then.

"She's nervous and excited, poor thing, and is walking the floor unable to keep still," he said to himself.

Just as this was going through his mind,

(Continued on page thirteen.)

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No man is as good or as bad as he is said to be.

Some men hurry through life as if widows were chasing them.

Jealousy bears a lot of fruit that should not be preserved.

You may feed a man brain food but you cannot supply the brains.

A political pull is the only thing that keeps some men out of jail.

Every knock one man gives another is intended as a boost for himself.

Many a man's good fortune is due to the will power of a deceased relative.

It is not a day too soon to begin agitating for a sane Fourth next year.

When trouble drives a man to drink, drink drives him to more trouble.

Don't waste time finding fault with yourself; that's what your friends are for.

Insanity is said to be akin to love—but a man in love doesn't care if he is crazy.

It is not that Mr. Bryan loves the silver issue less but that he loves the trust issue more.

France has just had a national election or we might find it running Dreyfus for president.

An ounce of contentment is more beneficial to a woman's complexion than a pound of cosmetics.

If all tombstone inscriptions were literally true his satanic majesty would have a lonesome time of it.

How weak and helpless a man is when a bold and aggressive widow makes up her mind to marry him!

Reed Smoot doubtless is duly grateful that in the general excitement of the closing hours every one forgot all about his case.

If the Michigan millionaire who married a New York chambermaid expects her to go on making the beds he is in for a rude awakening.

Mr. Bryan announces that instead of abandoning the silver issue he has merely put it away wrapped up in moth balls to be kept for future use.

An electric railroad on which the run from New York to Chicago can be made in ten hours is projected. The sleeping car porters are not likely to look with much favor on such an enterprise.

A New York court decides that individuals do not have the right to enter theaters if the managers object. Fortunately nothing can take away the individual's right to stay out of them.

LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER;

Or, The Shadows of Despair.

By CONSTANCE BEATRICE WILLARD.

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CHAPTER XI.

A FATHER'S UNCONSCIOUS CRUELTY.

Lady Katherine, Countess of Hampdon, was in her element, for that too vain woman was never so happy, nor did she ever show to such advantage, as when presiding over a brilliant affair such as the one now in progress. Robed in a wonderful garment, fashioned from cloth of gold, glittering with countless diamonds, so many and costly that in herself she was worth a king's ransom, she moved about among her guests, charming, light-hearted, smiling, and people who saw her wondered how it was that she had borne so lightly the long separation from her husband and child, not realizing the character of the gracious hostess.

Meeting the Earl, she asked him, with a bitter ring in her voice, often to be heard when there was no one to listen:

"Where is that precious daughter of yours?"

To the secret amusement of her husband, the countess always called Vivian his daughter, never hers.

"She was about not long ago, bless her," the nobleman said gently, his whole face lighting up. His lovely daughter was dearer than life to him.

The countess shrugged her shoulders.

"She is probably moping away in some corner as usual," she said coarsely, as she moved away, her wonderful robe glistening as she walked.

"I wonder where she is, my darling," mused the father, as he began to look about him. He did not understand the quiet sadness which seemed to possess his daughter, but he felt that she had been greatly wronged by the long neglect, and that he had no right to put any questions to her.

"Wrong always comes from secret marriages, and surely mine has been cursed," he thought, remembering his long years of loneliness and despair, when he was bereft of wife and daughter; of his wife's thorough unworthiness, and of the strange blight which seemed to have fallen upon his sweet daughter, the Lady Vivian.

"She has beauty which seldom comes to any girl, high or low, the sweetest of dispositions, great wealth, and a father's love, and yet the poor girl moves about as though she had no interest in life. At times I have surprised such a terrible sorrow in those wonderful eyes of hers. It seems as though she were asking pardon for something. Why is she so sad, and why is it that she takes no interest in these affairs which are the pride and glory of her mother's existence?" No reply came to the good Earl, and he sighed from the bottom of his heart, for he loved Vivian, with a love surpassing that of any relation save that of a father.

His steps led him into the conservatory, and he was just in time to hear Leighton Flemish say in such agonized tones:

"No, God forgive me, I wronged her."

The Earl began to apologize, but Flemish said, in a way that would have been impossible to him, before he had wronged poor Vivian, so filled with humility was it:

"Stay, Lord Hampdon, for I want your advice."

Hiding, trembling from head to foot, poor Vivian felt that a new agony was before her.

"I want your advice," continued Vivian's betrayer, talking to her father.

"It it yours, if it will be of any use," was the dignified reply.

"My lord, probably you cannot conceive of such baseness, but I once met and wronged the fairest, sweetest girl God's sun ever shone upon. She was so young, innocent and ignorant, that she did not know that a sin existed, and yet I had no mercy; I wronged her as cruelly as a man can a woman and now the punishment of the damned is upon me," and Vivian heard a groan come from the mouth her innocent lips had so often pressed.

"I cannot conceive of such baseness," was the cold reply.

"I know, I think I was mad. I have not lived as I ought. Many sins can be laid to my door, but before God none so cruel and utterly heartless as this one."

"Why did you not marry her?" came from the mouth of Vivian's father.

"Because I was afraid to disturb her sweet purity. I could not endure to let her know what a wretch I had been."

"Then you learned to love and respect her?" asked Lord Kingston, speaking for the first time, a note of contempt in his fresh, young voice.

"Indeed I did, who could help it? She was as pure and honorable as a lily, and I put the everlasting stain of dishonor upon her fair goodness. No regret and remorse upon my part, no amount of tears on hers can wash it away or change the fact that for two months she lived with me, when she was not my wife."

The Earl of Hampdon looked down upon the face of the man who was confessing to him what seemed the foulest wrong a man could commit, and wondered that he had learned too late what honor really means. At last he asked slowly:

"Where did you go with this young lady, Mr. Flemish?"

"First to Glasgow."

"Ah, Scotland?"

"Yes."

"The laws controlling marriage in Scotland are somewhat different from those in England," the nobleman said, slowly. "It is possible that the lady in question was your wife, is still, provided she cares to claim you."

Both young men gasped, while Vivian had to press a little, trembling hand over her rosy mouth to keep in a cry of agony.

"How's that?" Leigh asked, at last.

"It is the old matter of a common-law marriage. I do not understand the matter fully, but I remember a fellow officer was seriously entangled one time. He was base enough to try to deceive a woman; took her to a little inn and passed her off before witnesses as his wife. Later she claimed him as her husband, just on the eve of his marriage with another woman, and he was forced to acknowledge her."

"Lord Hampdon, you have brought a little solace to my tortured heart. Will you tell me what is necessary to establish such a marriage?"

"I am not sure; you had better consult an attorney, but I believe the simple calling of a woman your wife before witnesses, is sufficient, once the Scottish border is passed."

"She had not been with me an hour until I did that," came in tones of great relief.

"That makes her your wife according to the laws of Scotland, I think, provided she cares to lay claim to you."

"To lay claim to me?"

"Exactly."

"And if she does not?"

"Then you are in a very uncomfortable position. Until she dies or marries, it would not be safe for you to marry, for she can at any time throw aside your regular marriage. You are in a very difficult situation, Mr. Flemish, and I pity you from the bottom of my heart."

"I deserve no pity, Lord Hampdon. I have made my bed. If I had been any kind of a man, I would have married the poor little thing in the beginning and so avoided all this trouble."

"We often do things which bring only sorrow and despair, my friend," Lord Hampdon said, gravely, remembering his own hot-headed youth.

"You have given me great courage and help," Leigh Flemish said, gravely, "and I am going out to try and find my darling, and induce her to forgive me and claim me as her husband. Then we can be married in the right way."

Vivian almost betrayed herself. Her lovely face was lit by the sweetest, tenderest expression, for she so truly loved this man, that it seemed as though she could not restrain herself from calling to him and it would fill her very soul with joy to claim him, and that he had only to turn and gaze through the sheltering palm, when her father dealt her a blow which crushed her to the earth.

"My dear boy, you have my pity. Of course she will claim you, women jump at the chance of covering youthful indiscretions. I pity you because you will have to pay all your life for a youthful folly. Do not be too sure that she was so innocent and ignorant. I would not be at all surprised to know that it was a trap, deliberately sprung upon you," and the nobleman signed, remembering his own mistake.

Vivian never heard Leigh's reply, for she noiselessly arose and staggered to another part of the conservatory, where she fell lifeless, and was found a half hour later by her anxious father.

It was a pity, for as the words left Lord Hampdon's lips, Leighton Flemish sprang to his feet, crying:

"How dare you? She was but a child, and so pure and dainty. I would stake my life upon her innocence."

Then Lord Hampdon, who had just thrust a sword into his daughter's quivering, loving heart, said gravely:

"If you are so sure, Flemish, hunt all over the world for her, and use every argument to induce her to return to you, for if she can forgive the wrong you intended, she is one worth giving up life for."

The pity of it! Poor Vivian did not hear these words, but the others, so cruel and yet which seemed to blast her life, had set her weary, young feet in a desolate path, over a way burning with vain regrets and hopeless longings, for the poor child loved this man who had intended wrong to her, but who now was willing to make every reparation within his power. All unknowing, these two, whose lives were so interwoven, passed each other, and then separated, and each heart went through a very death of agony.

CHAPTER XII.

FEAR OF THE LOVING HEART DROVE HER OUT.

That very night, filled with his great love, and overwhelming desire to right the terrible wrong he had perpetrated, Leighton Flemish started for the little Scottish inn, where he and Vivian had spent their first night together.

At it he had passed themselves off as Mr. and Mrs. Leighton, and had taken pleasure in calling her "my wife" before every person who had seen them, just to see her eyes brighten. He now realized that it was not at the word "wife," but at the possessive "my," for poor child, she had been so utterly without any affection all her lonely young life.

"I ought to be beheaded and drawn and quartered to have wronged her so," he thought, again and again, as he neared the scene of the beginning of Vivian's life tragedy.

"Poor, trusting darling!" he would cry, and then his heart would contract. Could she forgive?

"She was an angel of sweetness and kindness of heart," he thought, "so perhaps she can, but it is simply awful when I come to think of it," and his sigh was very genuine.

On and on went the train, and he was landed at the little station just as the people of the hamlet were going to work. Without waiting, he made his way on foot to the inn and was delighted to receive plenty of assurances of remembrances from the good people. Without telling why he wanted their testimony, he secured depositions which would have convinced the most doubting, and sent the following telegram to Lord Hampdon:

"The marriage O. K. Now to find her. Will stop to see you on my way.
"Flemish."

Lord Hampdon read the telegram to his daughter as she was in his study, and started to explain, when she stopped him with a little gesture:

"I think, father, I do not care to hear," she said, with dignity, and he felt rebuked. How could he know what a wild torrent of feeling those simple words of the telegram evoked. If she only dared claim him! She could not but remember her father's words, however, and they held her back.

"I must go through life alone," she said, at last, burying her face in her hands.

Well she knew that there was no hope of avoiding Leighton. They were in the same social set, and sooner or later they would meet, and he would recognize her. Then such shame would follow, for not having heard all her father had said, she felt that his disapprobation would be hers.

"I cannot, dare not meet him," she moaned, throwing herself face downward on her bed, having hurriedly made some excuse and left her father.

Suddenly a scheme began to grow in her brain, one so weirdly strange that at first she gave no heed to it, then she decided to think it over. Finally her girlish thoughts all filled with wrong ideas and a false sense of unworthiness, she decided to do as her brain, not her heart dictated.

With trembling fingers she packed her traveling bag and suit case, the two she had taken from her rooms at Rome, with a couple of changes of underwear and one of her plainest frocks, and dressing herself in another, she managed to steal unnoticed from the house, and out into the street by the back way.

She had sent down word that she was not feeling well, and so her parents had borne her excuses to a large dinner party they were attending. The servants were at their dinner, and the coast was clear. Still, when she felt herself in the streets of London, all alone, with less than twenty pounds in her pocket, a strange sense of utter loneliness stole over her, and she wanted to turn back. If it had been only the shame, she might have done so, but she knew how likely her heart was to play her false if Leighton Flemish should once plead with her, and so she staggered away, and when far enough from the mansion of her noble father, Lady Vivian hailed a public cab, and stumbled into it.

"Where to?" asked the cabman.

Mechanically she gave the Waterloo station, and when it was reached, she paid him, and disappearing into the crowd, was lost.

The frantic father, who hunted for her, aided by the equally frantic man who wanted to prove himself her husband, and who recognizing in the life-size portrait of the daughter of the house his love, had confessed, could not trace her further than that station.

The papers teemed with advertisements. Appeal after appeal was made in the Agony columns, but to no avail. The crowd at the Waterloo station had utterly swallowed up Lady Vivian, and the skill of the most celebrated detectives could not trace her any further.

She was not dead, but living and suffering, but bravely, for hers was not a spirit to acknowledge defeat, and so these three lived within a few miles of each other, and each one suffered as few can, and so the days spun themselves into weeks and the weeks into months, and no news came of the missing Lady Vivian.

The other man who had loved her, went back to his estates and hunted sullenly, somewhat cheered, however, by the bright-faced Lady Bettie, still a child, but a very companionable one. The handsome young earl never dreamed of the harm he was doing, as he laughed and talked to the winsome girl, and tried to forget sweet Vivian, who he was sure was the love of his life. Had Lady Bettie been a little older, she would have caught his heart on the rebound, for he felt lonely and aggrieved, and Lady Bettie was growing into a charming girl. However, she was much too young to know how to make him love her, although she gave him her young heart then and forever.

CHAPTER XIII.

REASON'S THRONE IS VACANT.

"If you could do it, I would be so much obliged."

The voice was so sweet and low, that the man addressed stopped and looked closely at the one speaking. He saw a tall, exquisitely moulded girl, of not more than twenty, although there was a gentle dignity about her which made her appear older; a fair, tender face, with perfect features, and delicate coloring, which was surmounted by a halo of golden hair. However, it was the eyes which attracted him most. Young, though they were, there lingered in their violet depths such sorrow as to bring the tears into the eyes of those who looked and understood.

"Why did you come to me?" the man asked a little gruffly, because he felt so much.

"I deemed it best. We can get no satisfaction from your foreman."

"And you say that none of you who are working upon piece work have been paid for three weeks?"

"Yes, sir."

The man looked at the young face, and

saw that there were deep hollows under the perfect eyes, and asked abruptly:

"How have you lived?"

"I do not know how the others have done, but I helped my landlady and she forgave me my lodging, and a very little will support me."

"I cannot understand. It it not by my orders," he said abruptly.

"I felt sure of this, and so I resolved to see you for all of us, although the foreman said he would discharge me if I did," the girl replied.

"What is your name?" the man continued.

There was a slight quiver of the white eyelids, as the girl replied:

"Mary Smith."

The name was so obviously not her own that the man smiled slightly, but there was that dignity which repelled any rudeness, so he replied:

"I will do as you desire, go with you and inquire into the matter," and Mary Smith replied, repeating the words with which this chapter opened:

"If you could do it, I would be so much obliged."

"I can and will," he answered briefly, and as he and the beautiful girl in her plain, but neat dress entered the street, he ordered a cab and gave the address of an establishment owned by him, where white china was decorated on the premises, according to various patterns.

Although he did not know it, Mary Smith was one of the most skillful, and yet she and the others were ground down cruelly, and when they had remonstrated, their pay had been held back for three weeks.

The man, Joseph Kellner by name, marvelled as he looked at the beautiful girl, and suddenly realized that that at which he had scoffed had happened to him, for he was in love. He recognized that although she called herself Mary Smith and worked for small wages, his companion was not at all what she pretended, and his heart went out to her, never to return again.

However, he said nothing of what he knew would be either his bane or blessing, but tried to gain some idea of conditions, and from her replies to his questions, found that his foreman was a very incompetent and unjust fellow, and resolved to offer his position to this Mary Smith, who he saw thoroughly understood the work in all its details. He was just going to speak to her about it, when there was a sudden crash, Mary Smith saw a thousand red lights, then a crushing blow, and her sufferings ended, for she lost consciousness.

Joseph Kellner was only dazed when he was picked up, and when he saw the beautiful girl lying like one dead, her golden hair all about her, he suddenly resolved to see that she had tenderest care. All of a sudden he realized that even the position of his forewoman was not suitable for her, and he had her conveyed to the best hospital in the city, where, in a private room, the leading surgeons of the day bent over the unconscious body, but shook their heads.

All of the lovely hair was shaved from the injured head, and the violet eyes seemed closed forever on this world, but at last the white lids quivered, then raised, and the learned scientists hoped, but to their despair, there was no light of reason in them.

Trepanning was tried, with no result, and one after the other, they all came to the same decision:

"Nothing will cure her but a similar shock. Unless she happens to receive just the same kind of a blow, her reason is gone forever."

Joseph Kellner was like one distracted, until he decided to take the bereft girl into his own home, and have her cared for tenderly, guarding her as he would his own daughter, if he had been blessed with one. If she ever recovered, he resolved to try and win her love, and until then he would shield her from the horrors of an insane asylum. It was a noble resolution. He went further than that, for he carried out what he knew were her wishes, when she had possessed her mind, and saw that his workwomen were treated fairly and the dishonest foreman he removed.

Day after day, as he came home at night, he learned to look forward to the moment when a tall, graceful figure ran to meet him, clad in white, with soft, golden curls all about such a beautifully formed head that it was difficult to believe that reason was dethroned, yet such was the case, for the violet eyes were those of a babe, and while she was perfectly harmless, the girl who had called herself Mary Smith, and who was called by her benefactor Sunshine, had no memory, no intelligence, except for him, to whom she clung with the faithfulness of a dog.

In the meanwhile, just a block away, in a lordly mansion, and in the beautiful country seat, a man prematurely white-haired, mourned for a daughter worse than dead, while another man, in whose black locks, white hairs were very plentiful, wandered the world over, trying to forget and atone.

The Countess of Hampdon was as gay as ever, but under her laugh of pleasure might easily be detected the sorrow which was consuming her as well. Too late had she awakened to the responsibilities of maternity.

Suddenly a change came. Half a dozen lives were lost, one after the other. Two young men, out in their yacht, brothers, were drowned, and their bodies borne to their father, caused him to fall over in a fit, in which he died. A fourth, in one of the oldest and most distinguished families in England, at the same time, lost his life in a railroad accident; the fifth, was run down by an automobile while crossing the Strand, and these five deaths of the men who had in succession been his heirs, all within the space of two hours, killed the aged Duke of Barminster, and made Leighton Flemish the Duke.

It took three months to reach him, for he was in the wilds of Abysinnia, and it was fully six months after the death of his rather distant relative, that the young man landed in London, and received his inheritance. Naturally, all the entailed property of the six men fell to him, and he found himself one of the richest noblemen in the world, and yet the most miserable.

"I would give every cent I possess, as well as all my titles," he declared to Vivian's father, "if I could gain my darling."

"The sins of your youth grow very heavy when borne until old age," groaned the Earl, bowing his white head.

"Where can she be?" cried the new Duke of Barminster.

"Until you find her and gain her consent to claim you, you cannot marry anyone else," cried the Earl, a little mixed in his grammar, in his worriment.

"I will never marry," the new Duke said, decidedly. "Before God, Vivian is my wife, and I will not rest until by her own claims she makes me her husband in the eyes of the law."

"But she may be dead," suggested the Earl, giving voice to a dread which was always present.

"Do not even hint that," was the despairing cry of the Duke of Barminster, but he felt that all the world was dark, and he without hope, as he made arrangements to spend vast sums in tracing the vanished daughter of his firm friend the Earl of Hampdon.

Again and again he read her pitiful little letter, although it was burned in letters of fire upon his heart:

"I do not know why you have done this wicked thing, but I understand now that I have never loved you, simply the person I thought you were. I am going and I hope I will never lay my eyes upon your wicked face again. Oh, shame, shame, to treat me so, when I did trust you just like I did God and the angels. All seem to have abandoned me, but at least I will not be wicked any longer."

How often he wondered if she really did hate him.

"No, she does not," he told himself with tears streaming down his face. "She was too sweet and lovely to do that. I wronged her beyond any hope of pardon, but I believe that her woman's heart will plead for me when she sees my white hairs and the furrows on my face. She will then know that I have not lived these years in happiness. Oh where can she be?"

Not for an instant did he think that his wealth and titles would have any weight with this noble-spirited girl. She would not consider them for an instant, that he knew.

At last, after months of tracing, a detective, who had never failed on similar cases, brought in a few traces.

"I went about that Waterloo station until I knew every person there, and at last ran across a porter who had taken a golden-haired girl with two bags to his own home about the date of her disappearance. She had staid with them for a month, when suddenly she disappeared, leaving ten shillings over and above her rent. They never heard of her again.

"I did a lot of talking, putting in a question here and there, and found out that she had been practicing china painting, and then asked about the neighborhood at shops which buy such stuff. At last I got hold of an old man who had bought several plates for a couple of shillings, and he told me that he thought she had gone to work for some concern who did the work at wholesale. So far I haven't been able to discover the name of the firm, but I'll keep on working, if your Grace so directs."

Poor Leighton felt so uplifted at even this bit of news that he generously rewarded the detective, and ordered him to spare neither time or money to reach the girl he was turning the world upside down to discover.

"I do not care if it takes every cent I possess," he said in conclusion, and the detective had encouraged him, although he wondered to himself what it was that had so attracted the Duke, to make him so anxious to recover one who had so evidently run away from him.

"They are queer, these swell guys," the detective muttered to himself, although fully resolved to win out, for he knew that there was big money in it for him.

Little did he know that he had come very close to solving the mystery. One day he had brushed against Mary Smith, as poor Vivian called herself, and once he saw the woman he was searching the world over to find, looking out of her window, but trouble had changed her, and he passed her and so Vivian and her disconsolate ducal husband were kept apart, and then had come the strange accident, which changed a lover into a protecting guardian, and a lovely woman into a trustful child.

Slowly, yet surely fate weaves the strands of the rope of life. Gradually the wheel of destiny spins, and stops sometimes on the red, and again on the black. One day we appear to win, the next to lose, and yet in the end our destiny is fulfilled, and we enter into our own.

CHAPTER XIV.

A NEW SOCIETY FAVORITE.

"And who is this new beauty?" asked the Countess of Hampdon, carelessly.

"No one knows."

"Beautiful?"

"Gloriously so."

"Where does she come from?"

"America, I suppose, all strange things come from there these days," and the speaker, the Countess of Ralston, who was trying with all her energy to secure an American heiress for her son, yawned insolently.

The Countess of Hampdon shrugged her shoulders, then both turned to look at the new beauty who was turning the heads of all London, as she entered the room, leaning gracefully upon the arm of a middle-aged man.

She was wondrously beautiful, there was no doubt of that, and yet there was something hauntingly strange about her, for under her blazing diamonds, above her almost childish face, delicately colored as a rose, was snow-white hair.

She was exquisitely attired in a wonderful gown of cloth of gold, sumptously trimmed with rows upon rows of sapphires, a deep, tender, blue, almost matching her true eyes, in which there lingered a strange, questioning expression, which once seen, never left the mind of the observer.

She moved with the grace of a duchess across the room to her hostess, such a strange, wonderful combination of fair, young girlhood, and dignified old age, that those who saw, marvelled.

The hostess took the white, soft hand, sparkling with costly jewels, in her own, saying gently:

"I am so glad to have you with us tonight, my dear," to which the wonderful beauty replied in a gentle voice, so sweet and low that it went right to the heart:

"I love to have you speak like that."

"Why, you sweet girl," cried the hostess, charmed by the gentle manner. "I must know you well, for I love you already," and those listening wondered, for her Grace of Southtown was not given to enthusiasms.

As the girl with the snow-white hair moved slowly away, questions arose on every side, and men crowded each other to meet her.

The Duke of Barminster was among the crowd, but his heart was not in the festivities. He had come out of respect for her Grace, his hostess. All his thoughts were centered upon the woman who was his wife, but whom he could not claim. Three years had passed since the detective had brought him the few traces he had unearthed, and since them there had been no further news. Still the Duke was faithful to the memory of her whom he had so cruelly wronged.

Suddenly he was roused, as his eyes fell upon the lovely, sweet face of the American beauty, with its crown of wonderful, white hair, and he asked breathlessly:

"Who is she?"

"Geraldine Knowlton, a great heiress."

"She can be only a girl," the Duke cried, aware that he was talking to Lord Kingston.

"Yes. I believe she was born with the white hair, but it is stunningly beautiful," answered the handsome young Earl, who was still unmarried because he could not banish the love he had borne Vivian, poor Vivian, whom they all believed dead, except the Duke.

With a dreamy expression in his dark eyes, the Duke of Barminster moved forward, and a few moments thereafter was bowing profoundly before the woman who strangely stirred his heart, the first one who had awakened the slightest spark of interest since Vivian had disappeared.

Miss Knowlton raised her eyes to him, then held out her hand impulsively, saying frankly:

"I like you, may we not be friends?"

There was such simple dignity about all her actions, that everyone was charmed by them, and the Duke was no exception. Bowing low over the dainty little hand, he said, gently:

"You honor me far above my deserts," then as the crush was becoming uncomfortable, he offered his arm, and drew the beauty away to the refreshment room.

Few knew the unhappy history of the Duke, and so there were many wise shakings of heads as he lingered at the side of the beautiful woman, and yet if those who tried to be busybodies had seen him when he entered his richly appointed rooms, throw himself dressed upon the bed, and clenching his hands cry out for his lost love, they might not have been so certain.

While those passing his town mansion and envying the handsome, wealthy Duke, thought him one of the most fortunate of men, he, the possessor of everything except which his heart most craved, was alternately pacing his rooms, and lying face downward upon his bed, shedding such tears as only strong men can weep, and sobbing:

"My poor, wronged darling! Willingly would I give every cent I possess and this hateful title, to have you here by my side, the dear trust in your eyes that once dwelt there. How unmerciful is my punishment, and yet it is not a bit more than I deserve. I am like a man who had a precious jewel, but carelessly threw it in the mud to be trampled under foot, not appreciating its value. Suddenly realization comes, but the jewel is forever gone. Vivian, Vivian, darling, come back to me if only for a moment, so that I can kneel at your feet, and pray your forgiveness." Yet there was no reply, but the wind sighed and moaned, and the tall trees lashed themselves into an agony of tortured limbs, for nature was out of tune tonight, as was the scion of a noble house, which dated back to the days of the great William, and was one of the oldest in England.

This highly fascinating story will be continued in next week's Ledger, developing a most extraordinary situation. Any new subscriber or any one renewing a subscription is entitled to the Ledger free cameras and patterns as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

What He Deduced.

Some years ago there sat in the House of Representatives from Missouri, a gentleman named Benton. According to the Congressman that tells the story, Mr. Benton was known as the "shrewdest and homeliest man that the state possessed at that time."

In his early days at the bar Mr. Benton had, it is said, gone to Texas for the purpose of prosecuting a land claim. He lost the suit, but was so fortunate as to win an extremely handsome Texan girl, who accompanied him to his Missouri home. At St. Joseph the couple were met by a certain General Mitchell, a plain spoken politician, to whom Mr. Benton introduced his bride. Finally, he could repress himself no longer, so he blurted out:

"Mrs. Benton, ain't there any men in Texas?"

Nothing Succeeds Like "Egg-O-See."

The man who preaches the best sermon; the man who tells the funniest stories; the man who keeps the best store, or the man who makes the best goods soon finds that people come to him. Merit is the best advertisement in the world. People speak well of things they know are good. They pass the good word along.

The best breakfast food is EGG-O-SEE, for it contains all the life-giving properties of nature's best food which is wheat.

EGG-O-SEE is deeply in debt to the thousands of wives and mothers who use it in their homes, for these good women tell their neighbors about this great food.

Children and aged persons alike are friends of EGG-O-SEE.

Merit and common sense are the things that advertise EGG-O-SEE most. EGG-O-SEE is cheap. A 10-cent package contains ten liberal breakfasts. EGG-O-SEE is sold everywhere. Grocers must keep it if they want to keep their good customers, for good customers insist on buying EGG-O-SEE.

The fact that no preparation, no cooking, is required makes EGG-O-SEE very popular. Open the package; put in as much as you like in a dish; pour on milk or cream and eat. It is delicious. It is wholesome. It makes you strong.

A lot of interesting facts about EGG-O-SEE have been published in book form entitled "Back to Nature." This book also has a course of physical culture—fully illustrated. Anyone wishing this book will receive it free by addressing EGG-O-SEE CO., 13 Main st., Quincy Ill.

Mutual Congratulations.

The farmer had brought in butter and eggs to sell, and after the grocer had weighed the butter the farmer said:

"No use counting over the eggs. There's just five dozen."

"All right," replied the grocer. "It looks now as if we were about to return to honest days."

"It does that. I see that a congressman has been sent to prison for landgrabbing."

"Yes, and those life insurance fellows have got some hard knocks."

"You bet, and they are still after the beef trust."

"And I notice that two or three legislatures are after boodle members," said the grocer.

"And aldermen in three or four cities are on the rack," replied the farmer. "Yes; it really looks as if we might return to the good old days and be done with graft forever."

Then they smiled at each other, agreed that this world was getting to be a better place to live in and parted. Then the grocer had weighed the butter short by four ounces, and the farmer was half a dozen short on his eggs!

CURE FOR LIQUOR AND TOBACCO.

The Kansas Anti-Liquor Society is mailing free a recipe for the cure of the liquor habit. It can be given secretly in food. Also one for the tobacco habit that can be given secretly. The only request they make is that you do not sell recipes, but give copies to friends. Address Kansas Anti-Liquor Society, 15 Gray Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

The Fires of Imagination.

A couple of Americans were inspecting an English fire station. One of them, addressing the chief engineer, said:

"Do you know, in New York we use a nine-inch hose, not a paltry three inch, such as you have here?"

"Oh!" replied the chief engineer, "that small hose is for watering the station; this twelve-inch hose is what we use at fires. Besides, it saves the use of a fire escape, for when we want to send a man up to the top of a building we just place him on the top of the hose, turn the water on, and he is up there in no time!"

"Yes," remarked one of the visitors, "but how does he get down again?"

"Well," replied the engineer, "he simply places his arms round the jet of water and slides down!"

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once, Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

Pointed Paragraphs.

Matrimony has destroyed many sweet and pleasant delusions.

Never put off till tomorrow the meanness you can cut out today.

The self-made man is usually an easy mark for the machine-made politician.

The girl who waits for a man to come along and make love to her after the manner of a novel hero will remain single to the end of the chapter.

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THE LOCOMOTIVE SPECIAL

Engraved on works "23 JEWELS ADJUSTED" A perfect timekeeper.

Locomotive on dial and works. Genuine jewels in all important working parts. Fancy ornamental imitation jewels in gold settings on top plate, giving it the appearance of the genuine 23 jeweled watches that sell for $25 to $50. Solid Ore-Silver dust proof screw case, guaranteed for 20 years, both case and works. SEEING IS BELIEVING. Cut this out and send it to us with your name, post office and express office address and we will send the watch to you by express for examination. You examine it at your express office and if as represented pay express agent our bargain sale price $4.95, and express charges and it is yours. Order to-day as this advertisement will positively not appear again. R. E. CHALMERS & CO., 356 Dearborn St., Chicago.

DIDN'T BELIEVE

That Coffee Was the Real Trouble.

Some people flounder around and take everything that's recommended but finally find that coffee is the real cause of their troubles. An Oregon man says:

"For 25 years I was troubled with my stomach. I was a steady coffee drinker but didn't suspect that as the cause. I took almost anything which someone else had been cured with but to no good. I was very bad last summer and could not work at times.

"On Dec. 2, 1902, I was taken so bad the doctor said I could not live over 24 hours at the most and I made all preparations to die. I could hardly eat anything, everything distressed me and I was weak and sick all over. When in that condition coffee was abandoned and I was put on Postum, the change in my feelings came quickly after the drink that was poisoning me was removed.

"The pain and sickness fell away from me and I began to get well day by day so I stuck to it until now I am well and strong again, can eat heartily, with no headache, heart trouble or the awful sickness of the old coffee days. I drink all I wish of Postum without any harm and enjoy it immensely.

"This seems like a strong story but I would refer you to the First Nat'l Bank, The Trust Banking Company, or any merchant of Grant's Pass, Ore., in regard to my standing, and I will send a sworn statement of this if you wish. You can also use my name." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Still there are many who persistently fool themselves by saying "Coffee don't hurt me." A ten days' trial of Postum in its place will tell the truth and many times save life. "There's a reason."

Look for the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Trouble With an Editor.

Stranger—So you have no paper in this town?

Native—No, sir. We did have one once, but it wasn't run right, and we was glad to git rid of it.

"What was the matter?"

"Waal, in the fust place, the editor didn't allers treat folks right. He'd call one gal young and handsome, and slurringly refer to another gal just as pretty, leavin' it ter be inferred she wasn't pretty enough ter be called handsome, and she might be as old as Methuse-lah. Waal, that made trouble; an' after that, when Farmer Hayseed and Farmer Fallow both left the same sort of stuff on his table, he gave Fallow two lines more than the other."

"Yes."

"Waal, things kept gittin' wuss and wuss, until Gineral Oldman up on the hill died, and got half a column obituary notice, all about the Civil War and things, while my Uncle Jake, just as good a man, who never left the farm, but 'tended to his duties like a Christian, and was a pillar in the church, got only a quarter of a column. You better believe, me an' my friends felt hurt."

"I suppose so."

"Waal, we begun inquiring round about this editor, and we diskivered that, while he was chargin' us fer every little two-line advertisement we put in, he was printin' a hull column about his job office for nothing. That raised a breeze, I tell you."

"No doubt."

"After that, things come ter a head. The feller commenced stoppin' the paper on them wat didn't pay their subscriptions. Then we 'rose in our might an' druv him out of town."

Just Like a Girl.

June night. Moonlight. Clasped tight.

"I must be going now, pet. It is getting late and——"

"But do you love me, George?"

"Love you? Why, you dear little girl, haven't I been telling you all this evening how much I loved you?"

"Have you, George?"

"Have I? Why, great——"

"But are you quite sure that you love me?"

"Of course I am sure, my dear. Really—"

"And double sure? Didn't you love the old girl just this much?"

"What old girl? There wasn't any old girl that I know of."

"Wasn't there? Can I ask one more question before you go, George?"

"Certainly, my dear. What is it?"

"Do you love me? Do——"

N. B. When George reached his bachelor apartments he put a lump of ice on his head.

Hitting Back.

The suburban trolley was tied up and they had been walking toward home for an hour.

"John," she ventured after a long silence, "how far have we walked?"

"Dunno," growled John, as he felt his melting collar. "You didn't take a pedometer for a husband."

She said nothing. The next morning John was going fishing and instead of awakening at 4 he slept until 7.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, searching for his shoes. "Why didn't you arouse me earlier?"

"Arouse you?" she said sweetly. "Why, my dear, because you didn't take an alarm clock for a wife."

Rather Exciting.

Mother (returning home)—Gracious! Tommy, what means this? The lamp is broken, the dishes are smashed and everything is upside down.

Tommy—Why, mother, you said we could play anything we wanted, didn't you?

Mother—Yes.

Tommy—Well, we played the San Francisco earthquake.

JOKES AND

Feminine Way.

"I understand," said the parson, "that you young ladies held the first meeting of your debating club last night. What was the subject of your discussion?"

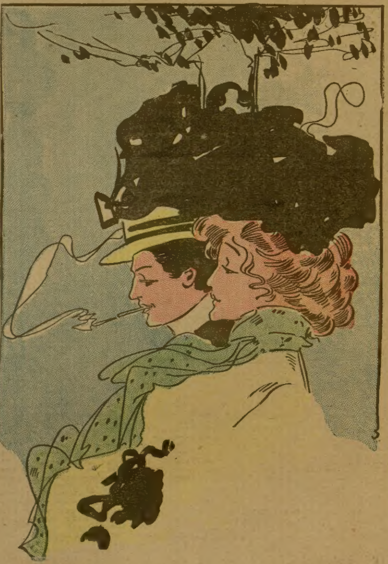
"Really, I do not remember," answered the maid with the dimple, "but anyway the subject had nothing to do with what we talked about."

All in His Line.

"That well-dressed chap on the corner," remarked the great detective, "doesn't look much like a crook, does he?"

"No, indeed," replied the private policeman. "Do you mean to say that he is?"

"That's what," answered the g. d., with a grewsome grin, "he's one of the best contortionists in the business."



She—I would rather marry a sugar magnate than be the wife of a coal president.
He—Even if the coal president had more money?
"Yes; you see, sugar is more refined than coal."

Tracked.

Rubbe—Does Bender's wife whiff his breath when he comes home late at night?

Dubbe—No; she floods the path that leads from the gate.

Rubbe—What good does that do?

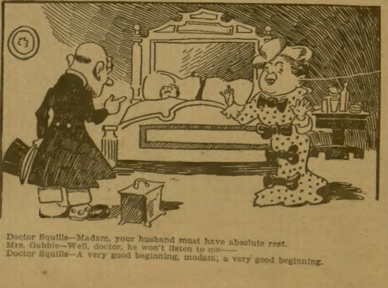
Dubbe—Why, in the morning she goes out and looks at Bender's tracks to see if they are straight.

Checkless.

"You may try to hold me in like you did last year," drawled the callow youth in the purple hatband, "but I will see that I go through my vacation this summer unchecked."

"That's what you will," snapped the old gentleman. "I'll see that checks to you are cut out altogether."

BRUTALLY FRANK.



Doctor Squills—Madam, your husband must have absolute rest.
Mrs. Gabble—Well, doctor, he won't listen to me——
Doctor Squills—A very good beginning, madam; a very good beginning.

Called Her Bluff.

He had been calling on the young lady for many moons, but being rather backward his suit progressed slowly. Finally the dear girl decided it was up to her to start something, so the next time he called she pointed to a flower in his buttonhole and said:

"I'll give you a kiss for that rose."

A large open-faced blush meandered over his countenance, but the exchange was made. Then he grabbed his hat and started to leave the room.

"Why, where are you going?" she asked, in surprise.

"To the—er—florist's for more roses," he explained.

And further deponent sayeth not.

Barber's Jest.

"Do you know, sir," chuckled the buffoon barber, as he reached for the tonic bottle, "that your hair reminds me of the setting sun?"

"Quit your nonsense," snapped the busy man. "How could my hair remind you of the setting sun? It is not golden, is it?"

"No, sir."

"Nor variegated in color?"

"No."

"Then why do you say it reminds you of the setting sun?"

"Because it is so rapidly disappearing, sir."

And the buffoon barber started to use the tonic bottle as if it were a fire extinguisher.

Sporting Event.

"So the village paper has engaged the services of a sporting editor?" interrogated the new arrival at Bacon Ridge. "Any late events of importance in the sporting world?"

"Wall, I should say so," replied the village postmaster in rather resentful tones. "Why, by gum, all the star sports that hang around Josh Oldham's general store have stopped playing checkers behind the stove and started playing croquet out on the village green."

Misunderstood.

"What are you reading, John?" asked Mrs. Stubb, looking up from her sewing.

"Why, something about 'Cleaning Up Panama,'" replied her husband, who was perusing an article on the improvements down in the zone.

"Why, what a loss of time! I know all about cleaning up panamas. All you have to do is to put them over a bowl of burning sulphur and cover them up with a bandbox."

Model Trio.

Small Boy (entering studio)—Say, mister, do you need a model? I'm a bird at posin'.

Artist—Sorry, but I don't paint birds; only flowers and fruits.

Small Boy—Then I'll send my twin sisters around. One's a daisy and the other's a peach.

Unnatural Finish.

Mrs. Meeds—And did your husband die a natural death?

Mrs. Weeds—No, he died suddenly.

Mrs. Meeds—What was there unnatural about that?

Mrs. Weeds—Why, poor, dear John was the slowest man that ever lived.

Facts in the Case.

Hawkins—As I hadn't been feeling well for several days, I spoke to a druggist yesterday and he advised me to——

Doctor (interrupting)—Oh, of course; he gave you some fool advice, no doubt.

Hawkins—Yes, I guess that's right. He advised me to consult you.

As the Wheels Go Round.

"Queer thing, isn't it?" remarked the thoughtful thinker.

"What's queer?" asked the other party to the dialogue.

"That the second hand on a watch is in reality the third," exclaimed the t. t.

Short Measure.

Diggs—It never occurred to me that Muggins was a midget until last night.

Biggs—And how did it happen to occur to you then?

Diggs—I overheard a woman say that he was every inch a gentleman.

His Little Joke.

"Yes," admitted the drummer, "there are a great many skins in my business."

"What is your line?" asked the portly passenger.

"Leather," answered the drummer, as he lighted a fresh paper coffin nail.

Different Ideas.

Dismal Dave—Say, Tim, wot would youse do if youse had Carnegie's dough?

Thirsty Tim—'Bout de same as he's doin', I reckon, only 'stead uv settin' up libraries I'd set up brew'ries.

Waste of Time.

Enpeck—But, my dear, I certainly have a right to my own opinion.

Mrs. Enpeck—Oh, of course. But what's the use?

JOLLITY

His Only Chance.

Gunner—Do you remember Col. Bluffem, who was always boasting about going through three wars?

Guyer—Yes.

Gunner—Well, he has bought an automobile.

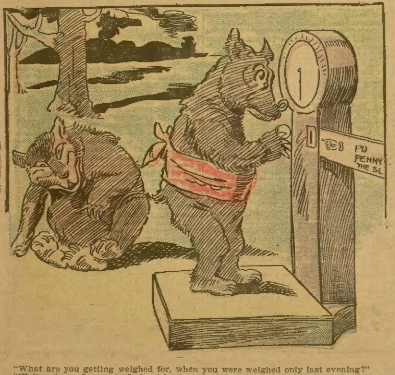
Guyer—H'm! I suppose he is determined to kill one man before he passes in his chips.

A Manager's Ill Luck.

Theatrical Manager—despondently—I am undone!

Wife—Mercy! Has the theater burned down?

"Worse! That new play on which I spent so much money contains such a fine moral lesson that the preachers are advising people to go to see it. Now it won't draw enough to pay the ushers."



"What are you getting weighed for, when you were weighed only last evening?"
"Well, you see, I want to find out how much that charge of buckshot weighs that was put into me this morning."

No Room for Argument.

"I always try to be up to date," remarked young DeBorem, as the cuckoo clock chirped the half-hour previous to midnight.

"Yes," rejoined Miss Caustique, as she attempted to strangle a yawn, "you certainly are the latest out."

Her Kindness.

"He proposed, but I refused to marry him."

"Oh, you noble, generous girl! You are always doing some kindness for other people."

A Stout Lady's Trouble.

Nell—May doesn't seem so quick to deny her age now as she used to be.

Bell—"No; she's gotten very stout lately."

Nell—What has that got to do with it?

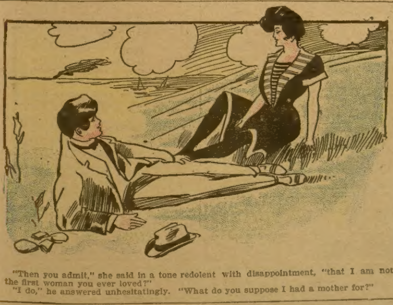
Bell—It takes all her time now to deny her weight.

Choose Well Your Doctor.

(Time, evening.)

Sweet Girl—What did you give mama for her cold?

Her Lover—a young physician—Opium. She won't bother us tonight.



"Then you admit," she said in a tone redolent with disappointment, "that I am not the first woman you ever loved?"
"I do," he answered unhesitatingly. "What do you suppose I had a mother for?"

Usual Kind.

Mrs. Homer—Did your husband make any good resolutions the first of the year?

Mrs. Rounder—No; but he made a lot of bad ones.

Mrs. Homer—Indeed!

Mrs. Rounder—Yes; at least they didn't keep.

Sorrow of It.

"It must be a terrible thing to be paralyzed," she said, as they passed a man in a wheeled chair.

"Yes," he answered, absently, "it makes a fellow feel so tough the next morning."

The Only Way.

Newed—I have tried in vain to convince my wife that the wearing of high-heeled shoes is injurious.

Oldwed—There is only one way to convince her and that is to wait until they go out of style.

Cause for Complaint.

Meeker—Yes, my wife always speaks her mind, but——

Bleeker—Well?

Meeker—I wouldn't object to that if she would only stop when she gets to the end of it.

Rural Prophecy.

Hi Harix—Yew 'member Zeeb Green's boy what went tew th' city las' fall. I reckon?

Si Oatcake—Yaas; what's happened tew him—git run over by a ortomobeel?

Hi Harix—No; he got a perlitical job.

Si Oatcake—I ain't supprized; I allers said he'd grow up ter be a loafer.

As Revised.

"Every pitcher goes to the well once too often," quoted the moralizer.

"I don't know anything about that," rejoined the demoralizer, "but I know every baseball pitcher goes into the box once too often."

His Objection.

His Daughter—But what objection have you to Algernon, papa? He neither gambles, smokes, chews, drinks nor swears.

Her Father—Oh, it isn't what a man doesn't do that counts. I want a son-in-law that does things.

Retort Courteous.

"I keep my boarders longer than you do," boasted the first landlady.

"Oh, I don't know," rejoined landlady No. 2. "I guess they only look longer because they are so thin."

Cross Questions.

Reggie—Supposing now, Miss Hawkins, that you were a man and I was a girl, would you try to kiss me?

Miss Hawkins—I don't know. I'm sure. What would you do?

Kansas Drug Store Brand.

Said the Kentucky colonel: "This liquor
Would make a sick man a heap siquor;
I can't make a bluff
At liking such stuff
And that's why I pose as a kiquor."

Not Quite Clear.

She—While in the country last summer I learned to milk a cow, just for amusement, you know.

He—For the cow's amusement or for your own?

Counteracting the Effects.

Jack, you are an ardent devotee of baseball, I notice.

No, but after I've talked golf all afternoon I like to read about two columns of baseball talk to rest my head.

No Trade Needed.

Mrs. Blinks—And so you have a daughter already in her teens. Are you teaching her any way to be self-supporting?

Mrs. Jinks—Oh, no. That is not necessary. She is going to be very pretty.

Summer Stock.

Farmer Cobb—Are ye going to keep pigs this year, Calèb?

Farmer Huskins—Lord, no! Thar's jest ez much profit keepin' boarders, an' not half so much trouble feedin' 'em!

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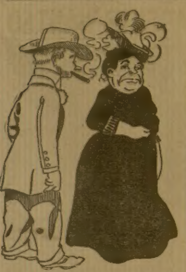
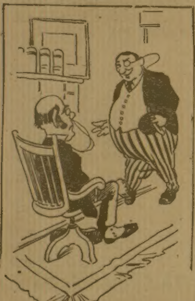


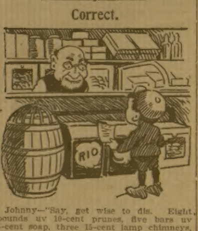
Mr. Blowitt—I have my redeeming traits.
Mrs. Blowitt—Yes, you have to have; you leave so many things with the pawnbroker.

Cold.

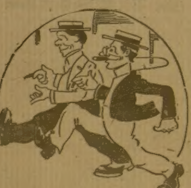


Son—"Why father, don't you recognize me? I am your prodigal son who has returned."
Father—"Ah, I see. I at first thought you were the fatted calf."

Correct.



Johnny—"Say, get wise to dis. Eight pounds uv 10-cent prunes, five bars uv 6-cent soap, three 15-cent lamp chimneys, four 2-cent candles and seven pounds uv 13-cent candy. How much is it?"
Grocer—"Two dollars an' fifty-four cents."
Johnny—"T'anks; dat's me 'rithmetic fer termorrer."



Stubb—I know a man who doesn't object to his employes' whistling during business hours.
Penn—Great Scott! Is he insane?
Stubb—No; he runs a boiler factory.

THE DEUCE OF DIAMONDS;

Or

THE VAN ARDEN MYSTERY.

By MAJOR ALBION F. GRANT.

Begun in No. 26, June 30. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MISSING FINGER.

It was some time before Howell Hollis, the detective, came back to life after the terrible choking administered in his own apartments after his visit to Mrs. Irene Bodley-Grant.

The room was almost dark and silent.

There was a sensation of soreness at his throat and his brain seemed in a mad whirl.

When he attempted to rise he fell backward tumbling over a chair and both went to the floor together.

He knew that it was not his assailant's fault that he was alive: that fiend in human shape designed to kill him, to put him out of the way for some purpose.

At last, Hollis managed to strike a light.

Then he sat down and slowly recovered himself.

He had been taken unawares by the scoundrel who had secreted himself in the room where he had waited like a tiger in ambush for his prey.

Hollis, in the course of his work had made enemies; he had run to earth men and women, too, for that matter, who held against him an undying grudge. This fact was patent, but he had not attempted to turn on these people, waiting in silence for their revenge to manifest itself.

That he had been attacked by one of this class, he did not doubt.

The little light that had pervaded the room at the time of the struggle had prevented his getting more than a glimpse of his enemy.

He knew, however, that the man was as wiry as a Malay, with long arms and terrible hands.

He had felt those great hands at his throat, had felt the fingers eating their way behind his wind-pipe and he knew that the fiend had left him for dead in the room.

While Hollis reflected over the occurrence he caught sight of an object on the floor that caused him to start.

In another moment he had picked it up and held in his hand the half of a deuce of diamonds!

The card, again!

The detective turned it over and over, looking at it with much scrutiny, eyeing it in every respect, while his brain beat madly and his whole frame seemed on fire.

The enemy had left it on the floor, left it there for a purpose, left it there to say that the Crosada had found another victim and this time not among the sands of Egypt, but in the heart of the New World.

Calm, once more, Hollis went over the whole hunt from its inception.

He began at the beginning, which was in Anson Van Arden's private room and came slowly, by degrees, down to the attack upon his own life.

At last, late as the nour was, he quitted the house and slipped down upon the street.

Ten minutes later he was in another part of the city.

Hollis no longer looked like his old self and it would have taken the keen eyes of Tibbals to have recognized him.

"I thank you for seeing me," he said to a young girl, whose slumbers he had rather rudely disturbed.

"You know I am always willing to assist you, Mr. Hollis," was the reply.

Jocely Gray, the typewriter, sat in her little room on the opposite side of the table and waited for Hollis to proceed.

"I want to ask you a few questions regarding one with whom you have more or less been thrown in contact."

"I am at your service."

"This person is Posen Blay, the head bookkeeper of the firm of Van Arden & Bloom, although one member of the firm is dead."

"I have not a very close acquaintance with Posen Blay. Of course, I know him—"

"Not intimately, you say?"

"No. There is something about the man that repulses one."

"What is it?"

"I can hardly say. He is forward and at times almost insulting. Fortunately, as Mr. Van Arden's employe, I have not been thrown much in contact with him."

"Is he a favorite with the junior partner that was, Mr. Cephas Bloom?"

"As to that, Mr. Bloom always seemed to take an interest in Mr. Blay."

"And Mr. Van Arden did not?"

"I happened to know that Mr. Van Arden would have discharged him six months ago but for the pleadings of Cephas Bloom."

"What are Blay's habits?"

"That I cannot say. He is unmarried, dresses well and has a fiery disposition as I have experienced upon several occasions."

"Did he ever try to become friendly with you?"

"Yes," said Jocelyn, with a little flush. "That is one of his habits, I suppose. He thinks himself a ladies' man and tries to ingratiate himself in their good graces. But, from what I have learned, his success has not been great."

"He sticks closely to business, does he not?"

"At times. The morning after the murder of Mr. Van Arden, when I went down to the office, not having heard of the tragedy, he wanted me to keep out of the private office. But I would not, you know, and that was when I got possession of the half of the deuce of diamonds."

"You may have noticed Mr. Blay's hands, Miss Gray?"

"I have. They are long and white."

"Any other peculiarity?"

"Yes."

"What is that?"

"The first finger of the left hand is missing."

"You are quite sure of that, Miss Gray?"

"I cannot be mistaken, Mr. Hollis, because I have noticed it so often."

"Being the first finger of the left hand, it does not interfere with his work?"

"Not at all."

"Where did the firm pick up Mr. Blay?"

"Now you have me," answered Jocelyn, with a smile. "I know nothing concerning his past, if he had one."

"Then you don't know whether he has ever traveled?"

"I do not."

For a moment, Hollis remained silent, then he drew from his pocket two pieces of card which he laid on the table.

"You have found another piece of the deuce of diamonds," exclaimed the typewriter, as she leaned forward. "How curious, Mr. Hollis."

"Yes," answered Howell, as he gazed at her. "It might startle you a little to learn where I found this piece," and he touched one.

"I do not know."

"It was left in my room tonight."

Jocelyn turned upon the detective a face suddenly void of color.

"In your room? This piece of card? Why——"

"It was left there by a fiend who attempted to murder me."

Jocelyn was on her feet in a moment.

"It is terrible!" cried she. "You must take more care of yourself."

There was deep interest in the girl's tones and Hollis saw a pallor steal over her finely chisled face.

"Why?" he said, still watching her. "I can be no more to you than a common sleuth."

"But the state needs you," she answered. "You want to get to the end of this trail and avenge the death of Anson Van Arden."

"I am going straight to the end of it now," and Hollis's eyes emitted a strange, but eager light. "You can keep a secret, Miss Jocelyn. I am sure I can trust you. The end is not far off. I believe I can see the first glimmerings of light ahead. The man who tried to kill me tonight had a missing finger!"

"What?" cried the beautiful typewriter. "You do not mean——"

"Good night, Miss Jocelyn. We will meet again. I will take care of myself. Go back to bed and dream. Good night."

Slowly, after the closing of her door, Jocelyn Gray turned away and went back to her couch.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. VAN HAS A VISITOR.

Mrs. Flora Van Arden was alone in the sumptuous parlor of the avenue home.

The lights revealed the rich furniture of the apartment, the soft velvet carpet, the great paintings which had been picked up in different parts of the world and the elegant bric-a-brac that had cost thousands.

She stood at the center table with her back to the hall door examining the contents of a little tortoise-shell box.

So intent was she upon her occupation that she did not hear the door open nor catch the tread of the visitor on the carpet.

Indeed, she was quite unaware that she was not alone until a hand dropped lightly upon her shoulder and she started with a little cry, at the same time turning round with a colorless face.

"I beg your pardon, madame," said a voice, before she could frame a sentence.

Catching her breath, for she was a remarkable woman, Mrs. Van Arden stepped back and looked the man over from head to foot.

"I believe I do not know you," said she. "We may have met, but surely, you are not on my list."

"I have not that honor," replied the other, with a grim smile. "But you may have noticed me. You used to call upon your late husband at his office."

"Yes. But you mystify me."

"I am Posen Blay, the head bookkeeper."

"Oh!" and Mrs. Van smiled. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Blay, but you know that socially we do not go in the same whirl."

The sensual lips of the head bookkeeper parted in a grim smile which the woman did not seem to notice.

"Of course," said he, "I am not in your circle, but I might be admitted under certain circumstances."

Mrs. Van Arden's look said plainly, "Impossible!" but she did not reply to the man.

"You have come to see me on some business," she went on after a little pause. "Is it concerning my husband's affairs?"

"In a measure, yes."

"Who let you in?"

"The servant, not Miss Enid."

"Miss Enid is not at home, just now."

"So much the better," and Blay took a seat on one of the chairs and made himself entirely at home.

Mrs. Van Arden stood off and watched him. In her mind the man had come to the house for no good. She could see that from the outcropping of his insolence, but she was alone with the fellow and resolved to treat him with a certain respect, hoping thereby to get rid of him the sooner.

"I have a proposition to submit to you, madame," he resumed at last. "It may not meet with your approval at first blush, but I hope it will not be rejected."

"You will proceed, Mr. Blay."

"In the first place, I have reached the age when a man begins to think that he may have missed it by not choosing a partner to go with him through life."

At first a little smile came into being at Mrs. Van Arden's lips, then she grew white there when she remembered again that she was alone with this man.

"I have nothing to do with your decisions in that direction, Mr. Blay," she said. "That is for you to decide."

"I am only thirty-nine," he continued. "That is not so far advanced in bachelorhood but what one can find a lady love——"

"It is a real good marriageable age, for then a man is settled in his habits, or ought to be——"

"I don't see why that should cut a figure," laughed Posen Blay. "My dear Mrs. Van Arden, we will not beat about the bush any longer. I have called to ask you if you will not let me take Miss Enid and make her the light of my life."

If a thunderbolt had dropped at the feet of the millionaire's widow, she would not have been more shocked than she was.

That wretch, marry Enid? The very idea was enough to make a fool laugh. What! Posen Blay, become her son-in-law?

Mrs. Van caught her breath at last, after the audacious proposition.

"This is business," Blay resumed, breaking in upon the widow's consternation. "I mean just what I have said. I want to marry Miss Enid Van Arden."

"But, my dear, sir, we cannot think of such a thing. In other words, we cannot for a moment entertain such a proposition."

Posen Blay recrossed his legs and showed his teeth like a wolf.

"You can't, eh?" he grinned. "Is it such an insurmountable proposition? Am I not as good as any other man? What's wrong with me, madame?"

"You must remember that Enid's standing in society——"

"Society be hanged!" blurted Blay. "It's a sham, anyhow. It's rotten to the core and fit for nothing but the gutter. Perhaps, you don't know what I have to offer your daughter, though I know she is such only by adoption."

"That is no secret."

"No? Well now, my dear madame, I will put forward my next line of troops, seeing that you have seemingly routed the first rank."

The woman looked at the bookkeeper, but did not speak.

Posen Blay drew a letter from his pocket.

"This letter is from Mr. Bloom," said he, as he extended it to Mrs. Van Arden.

The lady took it and hastily broke the seal.

It was a very brief missive for she read it at a glance as she turned pale.

"My dear Flora: You will please accede to any proposition Mr. Blay will make. He is an honorable gentleman and will not betray any one.

"C. B."

Mrs. Van Arden turned the letter over for a moment and then came back to the silent man on the chair.

"You have no acquaintance with Miss Enid," said the widow.

"Oh, as to that it is hardly necessary. Some people do not become acquainted till after marriage."

"But you are determined?"

"I am. I've burned my bridges behind me and must secure a wife."

"None other will suit you, I suppose?"

"None other but your daughter."

Mrs. Van Arden crumpled the letter in her hand and looked across the room.

"If you will call tomorrow, say at this hour——"

"When will Miss Enid return?" put in the bookkeeper.

"Not before twelve tonight, if then."

"Oh, I'll make myself at home in the library," said Posen Blay. "A bird in the hand, you know. Your husband was famous for his books, I believe. With your permission I'll retire to the library."

With this, Posen Blay rose and with a self-satisfied smile on his face crossed the room.

"It is the first door to the right," said the woman, who followed him to the hall."

As the door of the library closed upon Posen Blay, a dark look flushed up in Mrs. Van Arden's eyes. She stood for a moment in the middle of the room, then stepped to the table, opened a drawer and took out a revolver. Looking at it carefully, she concealed it in her pocket, with another mad glance at the door. Just then the clock struck ten.

CHAPTER XIX.

MISSING.

For one little minute Mrs. Van stood in

the middle of the parlor and watched the door that led into the hall.

Her face had grown strangely white and her hand gripped the butt of the weapon like a person bent on committing a desperate crime.

The tones of the handsome clock had died away and a dead stillness pervaded the chamber.

She opened the door and slipped on tiptoe into the dimly lighted hall.

No one was there.

Presently she found herself at the door of the library which she opened so softly that she did not hear it herself.

The library was empty.

"Gone?" said she in undertones. "What has become of Posen Blay?"

Just then she heard a slight noise overhead in direction of the room of the tragedy and continued to remain silent for a moment while she listened.

"Up there in that room, is he?" she said. "What has taken the villain to that part of the house?"

She had placed her foot on the lower step when the clear tones of the door bell reverberated through the hall.

The millionaire's widow suddenly concealed the revolver and went to the door.

Opening it she stood face to face with Howell Hollis.

"Good evening, madame," said the city sleuth. "You will pardon this unceremonious call, I trust."

She held the door open to him, just why she did not know, but her thoughts at that moment went to the man who had just asked her for Enid's hand.

Hollis stepped into the hall and saw the pallor on Mrs. Van's face.

"This way, sir," said she, leading the way to the parlor where she turned suddenly upon him.

"I have called to see if you have not a visitor in the house?" said the detective.

The woman's lips came firmly together.

"I have. But what is that to you, Mr. Hollis?"

"Much to both of us, perhaps. Where is he?"

"It is only Mr. Posen Blay, the bookkeeper of the firm."

"I thought so. Is he in the library?"

"No. You will find him upstairs in the room of the—the crime."

Hollis bowed his thanks and turned away, but suddenly the hand of Mrs. Van fell upon his arm.

"Why do you want to see him?" she asked as Hollis looked into her face.

"The man first, explanations later on."

"I will go with you."

They went up the broad and richly carpeted steps together, the detective in the advance.

Hollis saw at a glance that the door which had never been repaired was slightly ajar.

With a glance at the widow he went toward it and pushed it open.

"I thought you said he was here," he said with a quick backward glance at the woman who had followed him.

"What! is he gone?"

"You can see for yourself."

"But I heard him here a moment ago."

"You will pardon me, madame, but what are you holding in your concealed hand?"

Mrs. Van Arden turned two colors in rapid succession.

In another moment she had withdrawn the concealed hand and Hollis saw the revolver.

"A little drama, I see," said he with a smile.

"Yes. I intended to kill Posen Blay."

"Then I have just arrived in time. But, my dear woman, why did you seek the life of this man?"

There was no answer. Mrs. Van stood like a statue before Hollis with her gaze riveted upon his face. She did not seem to breathe and her lips, white as snow, were welded in resolution.

"What has become of him?" she asked at last.

"Suffice it to say that the quarry is gone," replied Hollis. "He has given us the slip. But you haven't answered my question."

"I will not answer it!"

Five minutes later, Hollis faced the woman in the parlor down stairs.

"Posen Blay came to this house for a purpose?" he said.

"Yes."

"Who sent him?"

Before Mrs. Van Arden could reply, the swift eye of the keen ferret caught sight of a crumpled letter on the table; in another moment it was in his hand.

There was a quick cry from the woman as the detective opened the missive.

"So, Mr. Blay came hither recommended by Mr. Cephas Bloom?" said he with an upward glance at Mrs. Van.

The lips seemed to close all the firmer.

"You acceded to his proposition?"

"I did not. He wanted——"

She paused abruptly and left the sentence unfinished.

"I would have killed him first!" she hissed at last.

"And have spared the law a job?"

"What do you mean?"

Hollis looked across the room and, seeing the door ajar, closed it, returning to face the woman in the middle of the floor.

"Where is Miss Enid?" he asked.

"She is out."

"Good! Now, madame, you will listen to me."

"That depends," said Mrs. Van with a grim smile and a glance at the weapon, still in her hand.

"When did you join the Crosada, madame?"

There was a little cry that parted the welded lips and Mrs. Van Arden tottered across the floor.

"What do you mean, monster?" she exclaimed.

The detective followed her and caught her wrist, dragging her toward him.

"It was not your hand," said he. "I know that, but you are dark with blood guiltiness. The person who left the half of the deuce of diamonds in the room overhead did the deed. You are particeps criminis, as they say in law. You, poor wretch, thirsted for the blood of your husband and winked at the crime that followed it. I am not here for you, madame. I want the man who did the deed. Tibbals was right in a way. There is a woman in the case, after all."

She tried to break from the vise-like grip of Hollis, but she could not.

"You have writing materials on yon table. Sit down and write as I dictate."

Mrs. Van Arden tottered to the table and [illegible] chair. Then she turned [illegible] toward the detective and [illegible]

"Write [illegible] as I dictate, to Cephas Bloom," said Hollis.

"To—him? I cannot!"

She fell back into the depths of the chair and flung the pen across the [illegible]

"He did not kill [illegible]," she murmured. "No, he did not!"

CHAPTER XX.

THE HAND OF JOCELYN.

The next night a man might have been seen sitting in an elegantly furnished room in one of the most aristocratic parts of the great city.

[illegible]

[illegible] him and the slightest sound put him on the qui vive.

Suddenly he glanced at the clock and rose to his feet.

Opening a little drawer in a locked desk that stood in one corner of the room he took out a large key which he turned over and over with nervous hands.

Not a word escaped him.

All at once he heard footsteps in the hall beyond and, suddenly secreting the key, he watched the door again.

It opened to admit Dorsey Hyde, who stopped short at sight of the man, who let his face lose a little color.

"It's for the last time," said Mr. Hyde, as he advanced. "Don't you know they're closing in on you?"

"They?"

"The 'hounds of justice' as they call themselves."

"I don't know anything."

"Where's the infernal key?"

At that moment the elder man, who was Cephas Bloom, felt it burn in his pocket.

"Father —"

"None of that! you've disgraced me," broke in the banker.

"And you? What have you done? Is it a wonder that I've turned liar, blackmailer, thief, everything but murderer? I belong to the Crosada. I joined the Order in Florence. You got into it through the machinations of woman in this country. I received your letter while I was in Egypt and at your command sent the torn deuce of diamonds to Anson Van Arden by the foreign mail. It reached his desk the morning after his death as I discovered by questioning his typewriter, Miss Gray, on the street."

Mr. Bloom did not speak.

"I have had to do a little blackmailing on my own account, for you refused to open your purse. I got five hundred from Miss Van Arden and attempted to extract a thousand from Irene Bodley-Grant, but she drove me off at the muzzle of a thirty-eight. Now, my beloved parent, it is time for us to come to an understanding. For the last time, I might add. Give me a check for twenty thousand and——"

Bloom started.

"Come, don't get gay," grinned Nixon. "It's that or the gallows. You can have the widow for whom you have plotted, you can invest her surplus millions, you can ride to new fortune over the grave in Oakdale; but I want my twenty thousand."

Biting his lips nearly through, Cephas Bloom whirled his chair toward the table.

"It will be all?" he asked over his shoulder.

"Yes, while you live."

The young man heard the pen as it scratched across the check-book and then the check was torn out and handed to him.

"That's it," he said with a smirk of satisfaction, folding the paper. "That's it, governor. Good night."

As [illegible]k, Bloom raised his hand.

"[illegible]?" asked Nixon.

"Where are you going?"

"To the devil, perhaps."

A malicious smile crossed the banker's face.

"I hope you'll meet with no obstacle on the road," he cried. "A swift, sure journey, boy!"

Again Cephas Bloom was alone in the same room. The footsteps of the family Absalom had died away beyond the heavy door.

"Good riddance!" muttered the banker. "He wasn't of my raising, anyhow."

The next morning at the faintest peep of day a man sleeping in a small chamber in another part of the city was rudely wakened by [illegible] hand on his shoulder.

[illegible] moment he was sitting bolt upright, gazing into the face of the man who had broken his dreams.

"My God! You?" cried the half-risen man as his jaws dropped apart.

"Why not, Mr. Blay?"

Posen Blay's gaze wandered to his clothes hanging over a chair and huddled on the floor.

"I've gone through them," said Hollis, noting the swift look. "It was there. It is the fool who leaves evidence of his guilt behind him."

There was no reply.

"I have it, I say," continued Hollis. "The edges fit to a nicety. See."

He took from his pocket two bits of playing card and joined them together in the morning light.

"You can see for yourself," he went on, addressing the stupefied man in bed. "The pieces just fit. You left this one in Van Arden's room the night you carried out the plans of Cephas Bloom and Mrs. Van. Then you turned on me. You did not suspect, my dear Mr. Blay, that when you bargained with Bloom to kill me, at the restaurant, that the man in the opposite stall was——"

"You?"

Hollis nodded.

Posen Blay's hands dropped to his sides.

"I'll be damned!" said he; then for another moment he was silent, during which time something clicked at his wrists and he caught a glitter of steel.

* * * * * * * * * * *

"So I wasn't so far wrong after all?" said Tibbals, looking into the face of Hollis through the smoke rings from his dudeen. "There was a woman in the case."

"[illegible]"

"I thought so. There always is. It was that way in Eden and will be so to the end. [illegible] Blay has confessed, they tell me."

"[illegible] secrets of the Crosada have been laid bare. The man who was admitted to the Van Arden mansion that night did his work. The key was carried off by Cephas Bloom, but we've got that, too, for when that individual tried a little hydrocyanic acid on his system, he left the key behind. It has the marks, as I told you, of the nippers that locked the door from the outside."

"And your dear, Irene?"

"Oh, she had nothing to do with the case beyond having a little scene with Nixon Bloom, alias Dorsey Hyde, and is packing up her things for a trip to Mexico."

Old Tibbals smoked a little in dead silence.

"When does Mrs. Van give her next [illegible]" he asked, [illegible]

"When she gets [illegible] net of the [illegible]," answered Hollis. "I have just seen Miss Enid. She thanked me for saving her from Posen Blay, but I don't think I deserve [illegible] it there. Blay is breaking down in prison and will die before the rope gets round his neck unless Justice puts on [illegible]. Well," and Hollis smiled, "we've cleared up the Van Arden mystery."

"And what is to be your reward, boy?"

"The hand of Miss Jocelyn Gray. I'll see that you get an invitation, Tibbals. There's always a woman in the case, you know," and Hollis broke into a laugh in which the old detective heartily joined.

The end.

Items of Interest.

In the public schools of Pairs the needy pupils are supplied with dinner free; but those who can afford to pay are expected to do so.

In every land under the sun, whether in Asia, Africa, Euroue, or America, Monday is [illegible]

Clergymen are very nervous when preaching before Kaiser Wilhelm. They all know that his royal nibs never desires to listen to a sermon more than fifteen minutes.

Turkey is the only country which does not use the red cross as an emblem of her hospital corps. A red crescent is used instead, in deference to her soldiers' religious belief.

Stuttering children have recently become alarmingly numerous in Germany. [illegible] public schools contain eighty thousand of them. The increase in the number is largely due to mimicry.

Much of the olive-oil imported in America is adulterated with cottonseed-oil. A law has been passed in Algiers requiring all admixtures of olive-oil to be plainly marked on the bottles, and also stating the proportions of the adulteration.

The greatest number of men ever employed on one structure was in connection with the Gizeh Pyramid, where seven million men were employed in forced labor. The pyramid is four hundred and fifty [illegible] and covers an area of thirteen acres.

Pearl-fishers on the coast of Ceylon find the X-rays of great service. By their application it is possible to distinguish without opening the shells the valuable oysters from those containing no pearls. Oysters useless for commercial purposes are thrown back into the sea.

The monks of St. Bernard, in the Alps, [illegible] soon to appear as automobilists. They [illegible] received permission to run automo[illegible] between the hospices of Grand St. [illegible] and Simplon, and Domodossola and Aosta. The chauffeurs will be chosen from the monks themselves, who will wear cowls.

There are many female sailors in Norway, Denmark and Finland, and they make excellent mariners. In Denmark several women are employed as pilots. They meet the incoming ships, leap nimbly from their boats, and actively and gracefully ascend the ladders leading to the decks of the big vessels.

Many London residents keep house, but do not keep cooks. They lunch and dine at a restaurant, have tea at a club, spend their evenings at a theater, and pass the intervals between meals in the street or in automobiles, and when they are ill go to [illegible]. All they do at home is to sleep, [illegible]

He Had Already "Et."

"I know a western Kansas town where the rules of etiquette are purely upon a logical basis," said a man from the short grass country. "The daughter of the hotel keeper at whose hostelry I was living was to be married. I received an invitation. At about 11 o'clock in the evening the wedding supper was spread. An old lady came down the table side, passing the viands to the guests. When she reached my place she skipped me and began again with the next man. The old lady had seen me eating my supper as usual at 6 o'clock.

"'You've et,' she said, as she gave me the go by. Things began to look dubious for me. Then an old man came along with more food. He also had seen me eating at the usual evening hour. He shied around me with a look of surprise that I should be at the feed rack again and said, 'Why, you've et.'

"[illegible]ybody had been 'saving up' for the occasion so that they might eat like heroes at that wedding feast. The fact that I had not been missing any meals ne[illegible] ostracised me in that happy gathering."

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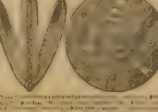

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CHAPTER XI.

TO THE RESCUE.

Bud Manton did not waste much time with Charley Bighatchet, who was completely at his mercy. The first thing he did was to make a slashing, painful, but not dangerous knife-cut on the instep of one of the halfbreed's moccasined feet. Having thus disabled the spy, he disarmed him. Next, with his quirt, he struck the redskin's mustang a stinging blow over the flanks and sent it scurrying up the trail. Then he removed his lariat from Bighatchet's neck and told him that if he heard a yelp out of him he would come back and kill him.

"Do you understand me?" he asked fiercely.

The halfbreed uttered an affirmative grunt.

Bud now bethought himself that his khaki coat had been relined awhile before with some dark material, took it off, turned the sleeves and put it on again inside out. Flattening his rough-rider hat, he thrust it into the bosom of his coat and put on the halfbreed's nearly spick-and-span new sombrero.

Then, with a warning shake of his fist at Bighatchet, he remounted and rode on down the trail, cheered by the thought that now, without fear of being recognized, he could ride near, if he did not venture too near, Noxon Norman, and that after nightfall he could travel quite close to the claim-jumper chieftain along the tortuous trail down into the Bad Lands.

All the afternoon, he kept up a pretense of scouting behind Norman, as Bighatchet had done, and he was glad that Norman rode forward in moody silence, accosting him with neither question nor suggestion.

When night settled down over the Bad Lands, the two had left what, in comparison, Manton considered "God's Country," some distance in the rear.

They stopped, perhaps two hours, for rest and refreshment. By one pretext and another, Manton avoided going very close to Norman or facing him except in semi-darkness and with the sombrero's wide brim tipped down partially over his face. He fooled round the horses until it got dark, and when he ate, he turned his back on Norman, pretending to keep an eye on the trail and speaking only in grunts that came near defeating the purpose of speech. When Norman swore at him and called him an "Injun Hog," Bud laughed to himself and fell over and covered his face with his big hat and gave an imitation of a man snoring that soon convinced Norman that he was asleep.

When the Ohioan was ready to go on, he kicked Manton and told him to fall in behind. The trailer wanted to knock him down for that, but that would have led to trouble that would have spoiled Ned Stearns's plans and made his own difficult mission a failure.

"But I'd like to smash him once, just for fun!" he muttered.

Several hours they went forward without adventure. The waning moon revealed them and the beasts they bestrode as the only living things in the midst of a scene of ruin and desolation. In places, the trail ran through deep-cut abysses, walled with slimy rock and gumbo hummocks, and around and over them towered those fantastic semblances of huge, ruined palaces, that mark the Bad Lands as one of the wonders of the world. When, at length, the moon went down behind a big, turreted formation like a frowning fortress, all that they saw seemed to fade away like the finale of a madman's dream. Then Bud was brought back to himself by the voice of Noxon Norman.

"We'll have to find some open spot and camp," said the Ohioan. "I hate to lose the time, but I'm not feeling right and we'll have to do it."

They found a good place and prepared to stay there till daylight. At dawn, Norman awakened Bud, saying that he was too ill to go on then.

"I have such spells sometimes," he said. "I shall be all right in a few hours. You go on to the end of the trail by the Missouri, and take this letter with you. On the river is a small sidewheel steamer, the Sassy Sissie, Captain Rox Rickey. On that steamer are some of my men, and by this time they have the girl on board, too."

"You mean schoolma'am?" grunted Manton, muffling his voice and imitating the speech of Bighatchet.

"Of course, I do, fool! You're to signal the steamer and you will be taken aboard. Stay there until I come. The letter will introduce you and explain why I am delayed. Ask for Captain Rickey."

"I do um right," mumbled Bud.

"See that you do. Before you go, find out what is the matter with my horse—he has been jumping as if he was full or hornets!"

The trailer found that the horse had got one of its forefeet entangled in its lariat, and released it. He knew how to lame a horse without injuring it permanently, and he lamed this one. Now that he had done all that he could think of to make Norman late, at the river, he quickly decided what to do next.

"I know where Lury is. That's all I came to find out. I'll go back and report to Ned. When Norman gets to the end of the trail he is likely to meet with a warmer reception than we gave him at the school house the other day. Goin' now," he announced, as he went toward his own mount.

"Go on—curse you!" Norman shot back. "If you make a mess of this, I'll make you sorry for it."

"I'll make no mistakes," promised the pseudo Bighatchet, and he kept his word—to the claim-jumper chieftain's sorrow and undoing!

Bud went down the trail only a short distance before he turned back, made a detour round Norman, struck the trail again and, laughing to himself, went up again out of the Bad Lands into God's Country and into that towards the headquarters of the young, prairie rangers.

At the first resting place he turned his coat again, and threw away Charley Bighatchet's sombrero and resumed his own rough-rider hat, under the sweatleather in which he carried the letter that Norman had told him would introduce him to Captain Rox Rickey, on the steamer Sassy Sissy, out in the Missouri river.

"I reckon Ned Stearns 'll know how to make use of that," he chuckled.

He tried to be merciful to his tired horse, but for all that he did some pretty hard riding on that journey back to headquarters. In a sense, it was a race against time and Lura's liberty was at stake. After all, the girl was infinitely more valuable than the horse. The animal was about ready to fall, that night, when Bud rode him up to the open space before headquarters.

"Take care of him—he's done his duty," he said, throwing the bridle into Brent Morton's hand. "He's about done for and I've not a moment to spare him. Where's Ned?"

"Inside. Did you find Lura, Bud?" Brent whispered, eagerly. "I asked no questions, but I was certain that was what you went to do."

"It'll be all right," answered Bud, "and likely you'll be in at the finish. That's all I can say, now."

"That's enough, Manton."

It was enough for Brent Morton, and it was enough for Kid Drummond, Hiney Schenck, Ben Tremain, Granddaddy Longlegs, Doc. Tucker, Jason Slade and Tony Drew. They gave voice to their satisfaction, right before the house, in the long, western yell of the prairie rangers, while Bud, inside, was making his report to Ned Stearns and receiving the thanks of Ned and Dill for his faithfulness and efficiency.

This is the letter that Norman had written to the captain of the Sassy Sissy:

"To Captain Rox Rickey: The bearer of this is my trusted scout. I am half sick and will be late in reaching the river. Be ready to steam down stream as soon as I come on board. Take good care of the young lady. As you value my money, let no harm come to her.—N. Norman."

"That will be good for any man that Captain Rox Rickey doesn't happen to know," remarked Dill. "Good thing!"

"We can get some one on board the boat without exciting suspicion if we make good use of that," said Ned. "But we must be off. Are you too nearly beat out to go down to the river with us, Bud?"

"I should say not," was Bud's quick answer.

"Well, I'm glad of it. We ought to make up quite a party."

"Seeing it's Lura, they'll all want to go," suggested Manton.

"And they shall. We'll have most of our horses with us. The others will be safe enough feeding on the upland while we are away. There's nothing in the house worth stealing. We don't need to leave a guard Every one of the rangers shall have a hand in rescuing Lura, and the glory of it shall belong to no one in particular. Get 'em ready at once, Bud!" exclaimed Ned, tightening his belt and looking to his firearms

In fifteen minutes the rangers were in the saddle and filing down to the roadway. Captain Ned Stearns was at his post in advance. Stanley Dill brought up the rear.

They rode all through the night, making no stop until sunrise. Then they had not yet entered the Bad Lands. They pitched camp for the morning feed, and while they were breakfasting, Charley Bighatchet came limping into their midst, throwing himself on their compassion and asking if they had seen the mustang that Manton had run off from him the day before, when the trailer had left the halfbreed wounded beside a stream some miles further up. They could give him no information about the mustang, but they gave him some food and he hobbled out of camp without having recognized Bud, so far as the rangers were able to judge. They were certain, however, that he knew who his entertainers were. He was not a menace to them and they could not then cumber themselves with a prisoner.

"We're likely to overhaul Norman further on," said Manton. "If he has got over his sickness enought to ride, he's not likely to get on very fast with that lame horse."

"What can we do with him?" asked Doc. Tucker.

"Easy!" admonished Ned. "If we overtake him going down, we'll give him the merry ha-ha, and on the way back we will take him in in good and proper shape. If we look for him, he can't get away from us in this country. If he should try to hide in the Bad Lands he'd soon be starved out Besides, there are others looking for him."

"Yes," said Dill, "the ranchers want him, and if they get him there will be a lynching!"

CHAPTER XII.

ON BOARD THE SASSY SISSY.

The prairie rangers went on to the river without seeing or hearing anything of Noxon Norman. Ned concluded that the chief of the claim-jumpers had heard them coming down the trail and had ridden to one side and remained in hiding till they had passed by.

It was two hours after nightfall when the party came to the end of the trail. Out in the river they could see the lights of a steamer.

"What boat is that?" Ned inquired of one of two men who were hanging round the landing.

"Captain Rox Rickey's boat, the Sassy Sissy," was the answer.

"How long has the Sissy been waiting here?"

"Sev'ral days. She has some passengers, but she's expectin' more. Are you folks goin' down on 'er?"

"I shan't know just what we'll do till morning. I believe a young lady friend of mine is on board," said Ned, insinuatingly.

"Thar's a mighty purty gyurl on that boat," volunteered the second of the two men. "She come down the trail with some men, an' when they took 'er out to the steamer, she appeared to be havin' some kind of a tantrum—anyhow, she was cryin' to beat a milldam. But it don't alluz foller that jest 'cause a gyurl's a-weepin' she's in some kind o' trouble. Why, Mister, thar's wimmin' that enjoy cryin' more'n most men enjoy laughin'!"

"Maybe that's so. If I thought the young lady was my friend and was worried about anything, I'd try to go aboard and cheer her up a bit," said Ned, thoughtfully. "If I wanted to go to the Sissy tonight, how could I manage it?"

"I could take you out in a skiff, but Cap'n Rickey'd look ye over right smart afore he'd let ye on the boat," explained the man who had spoken first.

"I could fix that all right," replied Ned. "Why don't the Sissy tie up at the shore?"

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"That's what we don't none of us know."

"All right. If I want you later, I suppose I can find you, can't I?" asked the captain of the rangers.

"Sure—I'll wait round awhile."

Ned instructed the rangers to camp not far from the river, and while supper was being prepared had a conference with Dill.

"I don't think we ought to wait till morning," he said. "Suppose Norman should get here and go out to the boat and she should steam away during the night. We'd feel cheap, thinking of Lura, in the power of those devils when we might have rescued her by prompt and decisive action—wouldn't we?"

"Right—we should strike a blow as soon as possible," assented Dill. "There is risk in waiting even until midnight."

"Say," Ned spoke quickly, "some one on the steamer might know my khaki uniform. Mr. Dill, lend me your hat and coat." Dill assented. "With those and Norman's letter to Rickey, I will go on board and size things up. If she is on the boat, I will locate her if I can do no more. I'll get me a bite of something to chew on while that fellow is rowing me out," Stearns finished.

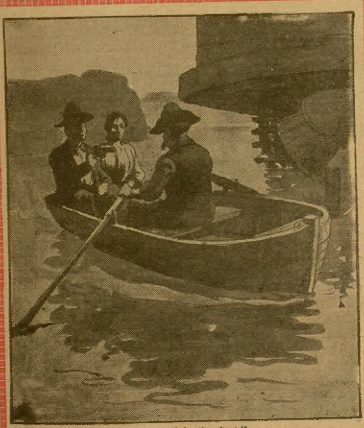
In five minutes, Ned was seated in the skiff, munching some crackers and between bites talking with the boatman, but without eliciting any further information. In ten minutes more, they were at the side of the Sassy Sissy and a man was leaning over her rail, yelling hoarsely:

"Who's thar?"

"That's Cap'n Rickey himself," said the boatman.

"I'm from Norman. I've a letter for you," explained Ned.

"Pass up the letter fust." The captain lowered a string with a loop at the end of it.



"Now pull for the shore."

"Now rope the letter, an' I'll haul it on aboard."

Ned obeyed and saw the letter going up along the steamer's side. Later, he saw the captain reading it by the light of a lantern that he carried. Then Rickey disappeared, but quickly reappeared where Ned had first seen him.

"Come on board if you want to," he said. "Climb on below and come up inside to this deck."

"Help me on board and wait for me," Ned instructed the man who had brought him out.

The commander of the rangers repeated to the captain of the Sassy Sissy what he had heard Bud Manton say about Norman's illness, adding:

"He's pretty near crazy to hear from the young lady. I am to see her and send word to him how she is by a man that expects to go up the trail to meet him."

"I s'pose it's all right," grunted Rickey.

"You'll think so when Norman pays you," was the answer. "All you have to do to get good money is to please that man!"

"I hope he'll be squar'," replied Rickey. "I'm wastin' a lot o' time waitin' for 'im, an' three times a day I'm fillin' up a bunch o' the toughest mugs I ever carried, but I'm chargin' it all to him. Come on—I'll show ye where the young lady is. Thar's another thing—it's tryin' on my nerves to have to keep refusin' to let 'er go—she don't like the trip!"

"How many of Norman's—our—men are on board the Sissy?" asked the young prairie ranger.

"Six."

"Where are they?"

"Down on the lower deck, all of 'em about stiff drunk. I've got 'em bunkin' in a little hole on the side that I can shut off by itself. I've heard a good deal o' cussin' on this river an' on the Mississippi, too, but it was Sunday school aside o' what these drunken toughs o' yourn can do. Now go right down on this side o' the boat to'ards the stern an' knock on the last door. The young lady's in there, but she comes out betimes for air."

"You're not keeping, her very close, are you?" Ned asked, reproachfully.

"Close enough, I reckon. This ain't no jail an' she ain't a-goin' to drown herself—she ain't that silly." The captain moved away.

Ned's knock brought Lura to the door. A light from within fell on his face.

"Oh, Ned!" she cried. "Thank God! Thank God! What an awful experience this has been! Norman—that terrible man—where is he?"

"On the way here, expecting to take you down the river. Sn——! I have come to get you away from here. All the prairie rangers are on shore. Say, Lura, if you knew you would be picked up as soon as you struck the water, would you dare to leap over the side of the boat into the river?"

"Yes—Ned."

"Sure?"

"Try me."

"The captain says you walk on the deck when you want to. I have a man and a boat waiting beside the steamer. After I go outside, you go on deck—watch me get into the boat, then jump into the river as close to me as you can. There is little danger. The captain doesn't expect you to do anything of the kind and Norman's cutthroats are helplessly drunk. But watch out and avoid any one who might want to stop you."

"I will not fail," she answered. "Now, Ned, hurry!"

As he ran down to the boat, he locked the door of the place where the six ruffians were sleeping off their liquor and dropped the key into a keg that he passed. Then he was in the skiff and the man was pushing it off.

There was a splash, followed by a smothered scream!

Lura was in the river.

"Quick, man!" yelled the young prairie ranger. "A lady has fallen overboard. Help me to save her!"

The two dragged Lura into the boat, and Ned took note that no one on the Sassy Sissy knew what was going on. Then the boatman felt the muzzle of a revolver against his temple and heard a clear, ringing voice command:

"Now pull for the shore! No treachery! Land us safely or I will shoot you as I would a wolf!"

About a quarter of an hour later, Lura stood dripping, but happy, in the midst of the rangers and was thanking them and receiving their congratulations and Dill's. At daybreak, in dry clothing procured for her at the landing, she was riding with her devoted friends back to her uncle's and her school. When the party had made half the distance, it was joined by a band of ranchmen and mine owners, friendly, but grim and silent.

"Where have you men been?" asked Ned.

"Oh, down the trail a piece," one of them answered.

"For what?" the young ranger queried.

Some of the men looked away from the questioner. Some of them looked significantly at Lura and slowly shook their heads.

"We've been takin' care of—him," one of them whispered at length.

"Of whom?" Ned asked.

"That man—that snake—Norman!"

"Oh!" exclaimed young Stearns, his dark face paling somewhat.

Half an hour later, he said to Lura:

"Noxon Norman will not trouble you again."

"I am glad. Where is he?"

Ned started.

"I don't know," he answered—"no one on earth knows."

It was not until a week later that Emmeny explained to the girl what the ranger captain had meant when he had said that.

Lura was indeed Lura Chon, granddaughter of Jean Chartroise. The United States Supreme Court declared the Chartroise grant null and void. That ended the claim-jumpers' syndicate, and to Ned Stearns it seemed that it brought Lura back to him—and it did. They are living happy and prosperous, on one of the finest ranches in South Dakota. In these days, Thaddeus Tucker is a real doctor and Tony Drew is a real actor. Manton is getting rich in Wyoming as a sheep-herder. The other members of Ned's old command are doing well in different fields of endeavor. Rastus Roorback is sheriff of his county. Emmeny, hale and hearty, says that she was all run down and the Great American Compound wound her up. So ends this tale.

Next week we will begin in the Ledger an exceedingly interesting story for boys and girls entitled "The White Canoe or The Spectre of the Lake." This charming story is from the pen of the famous author, Will Lisenbee, which is a guarantee that it will be captivating to all who read it. In subscribing for the Ledger remember you are entitled to receive one of our King Cameras entirely free of cost. See advertisement on page thirteen.

The end.

Honor Among Thieves.

(Continued from page five.)

the curtain went up and the dark figure of a woman showed itself in the bright frame of light from within.

Pendrick moved away a few paces, took a white handkerchief out of his pocket, replaced it, took it out again and repeated the same performance exactly three times.

This mystical performance must have been noticed from the window for the figure disappeared, the curtain fell, the light vanished.

Pendrick seeing this nodded his head and walked away.

He proceeded at a leisurely pace until he came to the wall surrounding the park. Here in the shadow cast by a gigantic tree whose branches overhung the walk he waited.

He had established himself there for barely a minute, and was looking in the direction whence he had come when he uttered a low whistle.

A woman, slender and apparently young, had just come in sight, and had paused a moment under the corner lamp looking over towards him, when a man whose presence in the neighborhood Pendrick had not noticed before, stepped out of the shadow of a pile of lumber onto the walk, spoke to her, thrust something in her hand and then turned and strode away.

Even at that distance the sharp eyes of the detective had taken a mental inventory of the man's garments and general appearance. As for the young woman she was holding something white up before her eyes, evidently a paper that had been handed to her by the man who was now disappearing in the distance.

Pendrick watching her impatiently, was about to step out of the protecting shadow of the tree, when she crossed the road hastily and advanced towards him.

"Mr. Pendrick?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I am so agitated. This note," she gasped.

"That man handed you?"

"Yes, it is from him, Gilbert. What do you think? He is safe and well, but for certain reasons he thinks it better he should remain out of sight."

"Foolish, indeed! He will only damage his case which looks black enough already. He has probably fallen into the hands of some designing rogues who are playing with his fears. Do you know this man who handed you the note?"

"Certainly not. Anyway he had his face muffled up. But what of him?"

"Everything. He must know where that misguided boy has gone. I must get hold of Renwood and reason with him. He might tell me a great deal that I should like to know."

"But where are you going—what do you mean to do?" she asked anxiously as Pendrick turned away. "You must have so much to tell me and that I am anxious to know."

"I have, but not now. Tomorrow at the same time. I am going to run down that man who gave you the note," and before she could reply Pendrick sped across the street in pursuit of the mysterious messenger.

This highly fascinating story will be continued in next week's Ledger. Any new subscriber or any one renewing a subscription is entitled to the Ledger's free cameras and patterns as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen. Do not wait. If your subscription has expired renew it at once before the paper is stopped. Thousands have renewed their subscription during the last month; we have also received thousands of entirely new subscribers. Now is the time; do not delay.

Brief Yarns.

Here is the essay of a little schoolgirl on "If I Were Grown Up:" "If I were grown up I should get married and have jam whenever I like. And I think I shall be a dressmaker. I am not going out in a carriage, like some people; I am going out in a motor car if I can afford it. When I am married I am not going out washing clothes, like some people. I shall expect my husband to take me out when I am grown up. I shall have a baby, and I shall not let anybody spank it unless it's naughty. If it wants spanking I shall spank it. I want plenty of money from my husband. That's all I have got to say about when I am grown up."

A well-known museum in England contains a cork model of the Coliseum in Rome. The keeper was showing a party of American visitors over the museum and mentioned that this was "made in cork." "That is curious," said one of the ladies. "We are just going to visit some friends there." "I mean madam," he explained, "that this model was made out of cork." "That is still more curious," she replied. "Our friends live just a little way out of Cork."

An aged Scotsman was giving his impressions of a local earthquake to a stranger. The latter remarked that it must have been an experience to find the crockery jumping off the shelves. "Ou ay, mon! It was grand! Ye ken, I've been marrit mony a year and, weel, that's the only thing that has happened in our hoose that the guid wife didna blame me for daein'."

Just Deserts.

"Ahoy, there!" shouts the commander of the battleship to the crew of a long, low, rakish craft aboard of which he can see a man struggling in irons. The long, low, rakish craft heaves to, and its commander responds:

"Ahoy, yourself! What do you want?"

"What are you doing with that captive? My guns are trained on you, so answer truly, or it shall go hard with you."

"This fellow in irons? Say, he's a match manufacturer, and he fills half the boxes with matches that will either break short off or not strike at all, and we have kidnaped him and are taking him to the Arctic sea, where we will leave him on a bleak island, with plenty of food and firewood, and a goodly supply of his own matches."

"Sail on!" shouts the commander, who, before the long, low, rakish craft hove into sight, had just made his fifteenth attempt to strike a match to light his cigar.

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C.O. 1.

A REDEEMING SACRIFICE.

BY L. M. MONTGOMERY.

The dance at Bryon Lyall's was in full swing. Toff Leclerc, the best fiddler in three counties, was enthroned on the kitchen table and from the glossy, brown violin which his grandfather had brought from Grand Pre, was conjuring music which made even stiff old Aunt 'Phemy want to show her steps. Around the kitchen sat a row of young men and women and the open sitting room doorway was crowded with the faces of non-dancing guests who wanted to watch the sets.

An eight-hand reel had just been danced and the girls, giddy from the much swinging of the final figure, had been led back to their seats. Mattie Lyall, came out with a dipper of water and sprinkled the floor from which a fine dust was rising. Toff's violin purred under his hands as he waited for the next set to form. The dancers were slow about it. There was not the rush for the floor that there had been earlier in the evening, for the supper table was spread in the dining room and the guests were hungry.

"Fill up dere, b'ys," shouted the fiddler, impatiently. "Bring out yer gals for de nex' set."

After a moment, Paul King led out Joan Shelley from the shadowy corner where they had been sitting. They had already danced several sets together—Joan had not danced with anybody else that evening. As they stood together under the dim light from the small lamp on the shelf above them many curious and disapproving eyes watched them. Connor Mitchell, who had been standing by the open outer door with the moonlight night behind him, turned abruptly on his heel and went out.

Paul King lolled his head back against the wall and watched the watchers with a smiling defiant face as they waited for the set to form. He was a handsome fellow, with the easy, winning ways that women like. His dark hair curled in bronze masses about his head; his dark eyes were long, drowsy, laughing; there was a swarthy bloom on his round cheeks and his red lips were as pouting and beguiling as a girl's. A bad egg was Paul King, with a bad past and a bad future. He had a hard reputation; was shiftless and drunken; ugly tales were told of him. Not a man in Lyall's house that night but grudged him the privilege of standing up with Joan Shelley.

Joan was a slight blossom-like girl in white, looking much like the pale, sweet-scented house rose she wore in her hair. Her face was colorless and young, very pure and softly curved. She had wonderfully sweet, dark-blue eyes, generally drooped down, with notably long, black lashes. There were many showier girls in the group around her but none half so lovely. She made all the rosy-cheeked beauties look coarse and overblown.

She left in Paul's clasp the hand by which he had led her out on the floor. Now and then he shifted his gaze from the faces before him to hers. When he did so she always looked up and they exchanged glances as if they had been utterly alone.

Three other couples at last took the floor and the reel began. Joan drifted through the figures with the grace of a wind-blown leaf. Paul danced with rollicking abandon, seldom taking his eyes from Joan. When the last mad whirl was over Joan's brother came up and told her in an angry undertone to go into the room and dance no more since she would dance with only one man. Joan looked at Paul; that look was the moment of his triumph for it meant that she would do as he and none other bade her. Paul nodded easily—he did not want any trouble just them—and the girl went obediently into the other room. As she turned from him, Paul reached out his hand and took the rose out of her hair; then with a swaggering air went outside.

The autumn night was clear and chill, with a faintly moaning wind from the northwest blowing up over the sea that lay shimmering before the door. Out beyond the cove the boats were nodding and curtseying on the swell and over the shore fields the great, red star of the lighthouse flared out against the silvery sky.

Paul, with a whistle on his lips, sauntered down the sandy lane, thinking of Joan. How mightily he loved her, he, Paul King, who had made mock of many women but had never loved before. Ay, and she loved him! She had not said so in words but eyes and tones had said it—she, Joan Shelley, the pick and pride of the Harbor girls whom so many men had wooed, winning their trouble for their pains. He had won her; she was his and his only. His heart was seething with triumph and passion as he strode down to the shore and flung himself upon the cold sand in the black shadow of Michael Brown's beached boat.

Byron Lyall, a grizzled elderly man, half farmer and half fisherman, came up to the boat presently in company with Maxwell Holmes, the Prospect school teacher. Paul lay softly and listened to what they were saying. He was not troubled by any sense of dishonor. Honor was something Paul Kng could not lose since it was something he had never possessed. They were talking of him and Joan.

"What a shame that a girl like Joan Shelley should throw herself away on a man like that!" Holmes said.

Byron Lyall removed the pipe he was smoking and spat reflectively at his shadow.

"Darned shame," he agreed. "That girl's life will be ruint if she marries him—plum ruint. And marry him she will. He's witched her, it seems like. A dozen better men have wanted her—Con Mitchell, for one. And he's an honest, steady fellow with a good home to offer her. If King had left her alone she'd have taken to Connor—she used to like him well enough. But that's all over. She'll marry King most like and rue it to her last day. He's bad clear through and always will be bad. Why, look you, teacher, most men pull up a bit when they're courting a girl, no matter how wild they have been or will be again. Paul hasn't; he was dead drunk night afore last at the Harbor head and he hasn't done a stroke of honest work for a month. And yet Joan Shelley'll take him."

"What are her people thinking of to permit it," asked Holmes.

"She hasn't any but her brother. He's against Paul, of course, but it won't matter. The girl's fancy's caught and she'll go her own gait to ruin. If she marries that handsome ne'er-do-well she'll be a wretched woman all her days with none to pity her."

The two moved away then and Paul lay motionless, face downward, on the sand with his lips pressed against Joan's sweet, crushed rose. He felt no rage over Byron Lyall's unsparing condemnation. He knew it was true, every word if it. He was a worthless scamp and always would be. He knew that perfectly well. It was in his blood. None of his race had ever been respectable and he was worse than them all. Neither had he any intention of trying to reform, because he could not and knew he could not. He was not fit to touch Joan's hand. Yet he had meant to marry her!

The man suddenly felt his eyes wet with tears. He had never shed a tear in all his life before, but they came hot and stinging now. Something he had never known or thought of before entered into his passion and purified it. He loved Joan; did he love her well enough to stand aside and let another, more worthy take the sweetness and grace that might be his own? Did he love her well enough to save her from the poverty-stricken, shamed life she must lead with him? Did he love her better than himself?

"I ain't good enough for her," he muttered into his hands. "I never did a decent thing in my life—that's what they say of me and it's true. But I can't give her up—God, how can I!"

He lay still a long time after that, until the moonlight crept around the boat and drove away the shadow. Then he got up and went slowly back to the house where he sought out Captain Alec Matheson who was smoking his pipe in a corner of the veranda and watching the young folks dancing through the open door. The two men talked together for some time.

When the dance broke up and the guests straggled home, Paul sought Joan. Rob Shelley had his own girl to see home and relinquished the guardianship of his sister with a scowl. Paul strode out of the kitchen and down the steps beside Joan, smiling with his usual daredeviltry. He whistled noisily all the way up the lane.

"Great little dance!" he said. "My last in Prospect for a spell, I reckon."

"Why?" asked Joan, wonderingly.

"Oh, I'm going to take a run down to South America, in Matheson's schooner. Lord knows when I'll come back. This old place has got to be too deadly dull to suit me. I'm going to look for something livelier."

Joan's lips turned ashen under the fringes of her white fascinator. She trembled violently and put one of her small hands up to her throat.

"You—you are not coming back?" she said, faintly.

"Not likely. I'm pretty well tired of Prospect and there's nothing to hold me here. Things'll be livelier down south."

Joan said nothing more. They walked on along the spruce-fringed road where the moonbeams laughed down elvishly through the thick, softly-murmuring boughs. Paul whistled one rollicking tune after another. The girl bit her lips and clenched her hands under her shawl. So he cared nothing for her! He had been making a mock of her as of others. Hurt pride and wounded love fought each other in her soul. Pride conquered. She would not let him see that she cared; she would not care.

At the gate, Paul held out his hand.

"Well, good-bye, Joan. I'm sailing tomorrow so I won't see you again—not for years likely. You'll be some sober old married woman when I come back to Prospect—if I ever do."

"Good-bye," said Joan, proudly. She gave him her cold hand and looked steadily into his face without shrinking or quailing. She had loved him with all her heart, but now a fatal scorn of him was mingling with her love. He was what they had told her he was—a scamp without principle or honor.

Paul whistled himself out of Shelley lane and over the hill. Then he flung himself down under the spruces and crushed his face into the spicy frosted ferns with a groan.

But when Captain Alec's schooner sailed out of the harbor the next day Paul King was on board of her, the wildest and most hilarious of a wild and hilarious crew. Prospect people nodded their satisfaction.

"Good riddance!" they said. "Paul King is black to the core. He never did a decent action in his life!"

But he did.

O'Brien's Hotel Experience.

Neill O'Brien tells some very funny things about a hotel. But he once had an experience in an Alabama hostelry that was just as funny and, what is more, it really happened.

O'Brien and a bunch of the minstrels, when the show reached the Alabama town, asked to be directed to the best hotel. "Wal," said the native whom they asked, "we ain't got but two. I guess the brick one's the most high-toned. They sweep its office out every onct in a while."

"We went to the brick hotel," said O'Brien. "The proprietor was setting up a stove in the office, chewing tobacco and petting a small, woolly dog. I asked him if he had any rooms.

"'Have I got any rooms?' he answered. 'Yer a fool. Ef I didn't have no rooms this here wouldn't be no hotel, would it?' Then he said: 'Do you all want rooms?'

"We said we did. He yawned and stretched himself. Then he he stood up, and, pointing at me, said: 'Four.' Next he went down the line pointing at us, each in turn, and giving us a number. 'Them's yer rooms,' he said. 'Now, go hunt 'em.' Just then the wife of our manager came in and was also given a number. We all went upstairs and found our rooms. It was winter and they were chilly, so we all gathered in the office again to complain.

"'There's no fire in those rooms,' I said to the landlord.

"'No,' he replied, 'an' they ain't goin' to be none, either.'

"Then our manager's wife spoke up. 'There's a man in my room,' she said, indignantly.

"'Wal,' replied the landlord, 'he ain't a-goin' to stay there all day, is he?'

"We were all grumbling, and it didn't please the landlord. He yawned again and got up and went around behind the counter. Leaning on the counter, his head in his hands, he drawled:

"'Hey, Fido, come here to me. I had to pick fleas off'n you onct before frum 'soclatin' with a bunch of fellers like that.'

"We were all sitting around the stove that afternoon grumbling, when a traveling man came in. He thought he'd make a hit with us, so he began kicking about the food. 'Landlord,' he said, 'I've been here a week now and I haven't had a decent meal yet.'

"'That ain't nothin',' replied the landlord. 'I been here 'leven year an' I ain't had a decent meal here, neither.'

"But about 5 o'clock that afternoon he put on the straw that broke the camel's back. We were sitting in the lobby, trying to keep warm, when he came up to us. 'Say,' he said, 'I wisht one of you fellers 'ud pay up in advance so's I could go git a drink.'

"That was enough. We went to the other hotel."

All About June Bugs.

"Bern has an official collector of June bugs," writes a correspondent of The Daily News from Switzerland. "This personage is appointed by the city council when the triennial pest of June bugs occurs, and he is empowered to destroy all the insects that may be brought to him. Each owner of a small estate is obliged to gather five pounds of bugs, and those who happen to be the proprietors of larger pieces of property must collect proportionately more. For each pound that is missing from this obligatory amount a fine of 10 cents is imposed, but if more than the required quota is forthcoming, a premium of 2 cents a pound is paid. This remuneration is offered also to others beside the property owners. A land holder who entirely neglects to gather any bugs at all is subject to a fine of from $5 to $10. School children receive permission to enter large estates where they shake the trees and poke long sticks about in their endeavors to dislodge as many bugs as possible.

"In times of old, the ancient chroniclers tell us, it was the custom to attempt to rid the country of these unwelcome visitors by citing them into court and by banishing them from the country. But the wily insects failed to obey the summons and continued to fly about in the face of the law, laying eggs promiscuously and contrary to edict. In a certain village it was determined to make a terrible and lasting example of all the insects found within its borders. With considerable expenditure of time and patience quantities of bugs were collected and placed alive in a huge sack. Deliberation was held as to the fate of these hard-backed prisoners. Ordinary death was considered too light a punishment for such offenders. A hideous end must be theirs.

"A procession of the inhabitants of the village, advisers and councilors, wise men and children, wended its way slowly toward the place of execution, the summit of a high peak. This was laboriously climbed, an executioner with the bag of buzzing bugs in the lead. With due regard for the responsibility and justness of their act the wise approached the edge of the precipice. The bugs were to be ignominiously dashed to pieces on the rocks thousands of feet below. The executioner hung over the crag; the bag, top downward, was opened, and the bugs shaken out to their death. But instead of falling like so many lumps of lead as they ought to have done on such an occasion, the bugs, to the amazement of all, spread their wings and flew away."

Uses of Asbestos.

Asbestos can fairly lay claim to the title of being the most useful of all minerals. It has been called a mineralogical vegetable. It is both fibrous and crystalline, elastic, yet brittle, a floating stone, which can be readily carded, spun and woven into tissue. In Germany it is known as stein-flachs (stone flax), and the miners of Quebec give it quite as expressive a name—pierre coton (cotton stone).

The asbestos mines of Quebec are the most famous in the world, yielding about 85 per cent of the entire output, Italy being the only competing country, and there the industry is declining. Although Charlemagne is said to have had a tablecloth of asbestos, which he cleansed by throwing into fire, the material was practically unknown until 1850.

Asbestos is spun into yarns, from which cloth is woven for drop curtains in theaters, clothing for firemen, acid workers and others. It is made into lamp wicks, gloves for stokers and ropes for fire escapes. It is felted into mill board to be used as an insulator in dynamos, as a fire-proof lining for floors, and in countless other ways.

Doing His Part.

"What," asked the thoughtful man at the party, where each person was asked to assist in entertaining the guests by propounding an original conundrum, "what is the difference between a man walking upstairs backwards with his mouth full of hairpins and a boy falling off a load of hay into a barrel of tar?"

The others gasped and thought and finally gave it up.

"Tell us the answer, Mr. Biljum," said the hostess. "That is quite the most original conundrum of the evening."

"Answer? Answer? Why, that is for you folks to supply. I supposed that you would be satisfied if I thought up something unusual."

No Provocation.

"What I say is quite right you know," said the man in the witness box. "The man who has just moved into the next house to mine wilfully threw a pot over the fence and hit my wife in the face as she was looking over the railings."

"And you persist in saying that your neighbor deliberately seized the can and hit her?" asked the Judge.

"Yes, yer honor."

"Did she give him any provocation?"

"Well, yer honor, it was like this——"

"Did she, or did she not?" snapped the Judge, angrily.

"No, sir. All she gave him was a piece of her mind and a couple of clouts over the head with a clothes-prop!"

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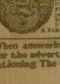

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STRATEGY and INNOCENCE.

If the twins had been within sound of the telephone bell probably they would have guessed the truth. The telephone was a new and unalloyed wonder and the twins signified their appreciation of it by responding to its every summons and following minutely the audible half of its mystic conversation.

However, at the crucial moment Jack was engaged at a distance in impersonating an automobile at full speed and Phyllis, whose imagination in these co-operative diversions was never required to take such stately flights, had accepted the role of banana vender, shortly to be bumped, bowled over and completely extinguished by this counterfeit tyrant of the thoroughfare. A real banana vender had met with a catastrophe of this sort in their sight the day before. Two moments after the conversation by telephone, which they did not hear, had ceased they were summoned to the house.

"Why must we dress up?" demanded Jack, when he began to realize what was to happen. He felt keenly the encroachment upon the informality of his Saturday afternoon attire.

"Mother doesn't like to have her babies look so ragged," replied that parent, strategically.

"Why don't you want us to be ragged?" insisted Jack. "You didn't care last Saturday. Father said he never saw my face so dirty," he continued, piling up evidence.

"But it really isn't nice to look like frights. After this you will be dressed every Saturday afternoon, just as you are on school days and Sundays."

Phyllis had been wrestling with conclusions. "Is some one coming?" she asked. "May I stay up to dinner?"

"No, darling." And no court of veracity could have decided which question it was the mother answered.

Phyllis, however, watched the appearance of her second best dress and experience was more convincing than parental negatives. "I think some one is coming, Jack," she said, calmly. "I think that's why we are dressing up."

"Is it Uncle Harry?" inquired Jack, eagerly. "He promised to bring me some marbles."

The strategic parent retreated behind the usual defenses. She assumed her prerogative of authority, unquestionable source of decisions and commands. "Mother said," she repeated firmly, "that she does not like to see you looking so ragged. That is the only reason you are dressing up." It sounded masterful. It was really a humiliating capitulation.

"Will you hate to see us look this way next Saturday, too?" asked Jack.

"Every Saturday," repeated the parent, firmly.

Jack wore the expression of a philosopher who resigns himself to the inevitable. Phyllis, however, had no regrets. She possessed the feminine adaptability to fuss and feathers.

"There," sighed the strategic parent, as the twins creaked out of sight around the bend in the front stairway. "Now they won't tell Harriet Van Allen the minute she arrives that I was expecting her and they have on their white frocks and best shoes. I am glad they weren't near the phone when she called me up."

Mrs. Van Allen was one of those disturbing visitors who never found virtue in uncouth and uncombed juvenility. The small Van Allens were always spick and span and less vigorous mothers than theirs succeeded in emulating this condition so far as their offsprings were concerned only when it was known beforehand that Mrs. Van Allen was coming.

Mrs. Van Allen arrived. The twins were introduced. Conversation followed. Unluckily, at that moment the strategic parent was called to the telephone. Unluckily, also, the twins found that instrument less attractive than the visitor.

"That is a very handsome gown you have on," began Mrs. Van Allen, by way of making herself agreeable.

Phyllis demonstrated the golden quality of silence.

"It is her best one," explained Jack. "These are my best shoes, too."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Van Allen. "It must be lovely to have on one's best shoes."

"Only," qualified Jack, "a boy likes bare feet better."

"We're never going to have bare feet any more," remarked Phyllis at this juncture, steadfastly addressing her brother in spite of the fact that he was already possessed of the information. "We're always going to be dressed up Saturday afternoons."

"It's because mother doesn't like to see us so ragged," explained Jack, politely. "She didn't mind until today, but after this she's going to."

"We thought," said Phyllis, in a sudden burst of confidence that included the whole world, "we thought at first it was because some one was coming." Then she was immediately covered with confusion when she noted that the visitor was listening to her attentively.

It was at this point that the strategic parent hurried back into the room.

"Well, babies," said she, with the benign smile of ignorance, "how are you entertaining Mrs. Van Allen?"

"Because," finished Jack, sticking to the former subject of conversation with painful tenacity, "mother used to dress us up on Saturday only when somebody was coming."

Having thus creditably acquitted himself of all conversational responsibility, he beamed cheerfully upon his mother.

Gentlemanly Question.

There is a spur of the railway running up the valley of Virginia, from Harpers Ferry to Strasburg. There is no dining-car attached to the train that makes the trip. To supply the wants of the hungry public on the coaches at this hour, Dick Wells, an old Virginia "fo' de war" darky, has for the last 30 years served passengers with coffee, eggs, chicken sandwiches and pies on these cars; every trip he is on the train, serving lunches from a basket.

Recently on their way to the unveiling of the monument at Newmarket to the Pennsylvania soldiers who lost their lives at this historical place were a great many northern veterans, and the quaint old negro reaped a rich harvest on these trips, often receiving double and treble what he asked for his wares.

A northern gentleman on his way to attend these ceremonies, while eating a "snack" of chicken and pie, bought from old Dick, began to compliment the chicken and pastry, and finally wound up by asking, "Uncle, where do you get such nice chickens?"

The old negro, with a twinkle in his eyes and a wink at the other passengers, replied, "Boss, I sho knows you ain't from de souf."

"Why, uncle," exclaimed the gentleman, "how can you tell that I am not from the south?"

"'Cause, suh," answered Dick, "no southern gentleman ever comprermises a nigger by askin' him whar he gits his chickens."

Didn't Want to Be a Woman.

A West Side minister, who has solemnized many marriages, was called into his study the other day by a couple. The clergyman listened to the young man's brief explanation of their errand.

"So," he said, "you want to get married, do you?"

To his surprise the prospective bride assumed the responsibility of replying to this remark.

"He does," she said.

"And how about yourself?" asked the minister. "Have you any objections to the union?"

"None," she said, "except those found in the ceremony. I have been studying up on the subject, and I find that all marriage services employ the term 'woman.' I decidedly object to that. I have never been used to being called a woman. I am from Alabama. Down in our part of the country nobody ever thinks of saying anything but 'lady.' I have been spoken of as a lady all my life. If you can change that to 'lady,' I am willing to go ahead."

The clergyman finally overcame his astonishment sufficiently to explain that that concession was not possible. After arguing for an hour he finally modified her hostility to the word "woman" and persuaded her to go through the ceremony.

A Lucky Girl.

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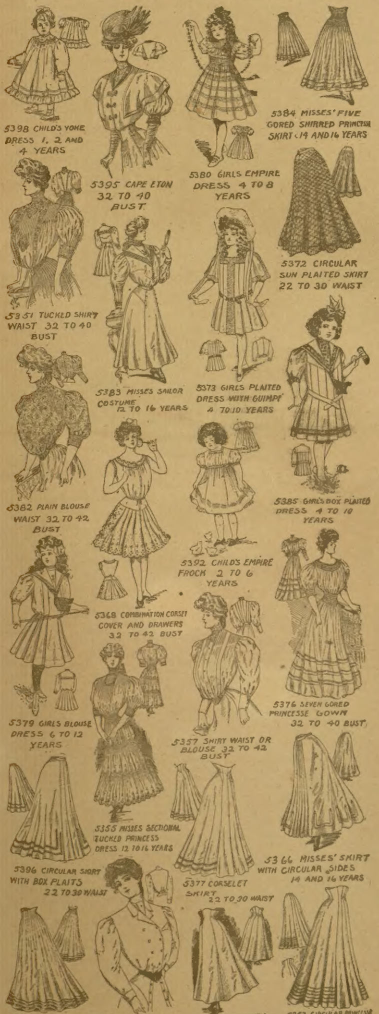
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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

THE UNSEEN PLAYMATE.

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

When children are playing alone on the green,
Along comes the playmate that never was seen.
When children are happy and lonely and good,
The Friend of the Children comes out of the wood.

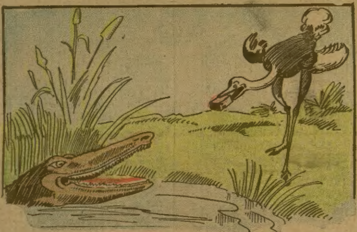
Nobody heard him and nobody saw,
His is a picture you never could draw;
But he's sure to be present, abroad or at home,
When children are happy and playing alone.

He lies in the laurels, he runs on the grass,
He sings when you tinkle the musical glass;
Whene'er you are happy and cannot tell why,
The Friend of the children is sure to be by.

He loves to be little, he hates to be big,
'Tis he that inhabits the caves that you dig;
'Tis he when you play with the soldiers of tin
That sides with the Frenchman and never can win.

'Tis he, when at night you go off to your bed,
Bids you go to sleep and not trouble your head;
For wherever they're lying, in cupboard or shelf,
'Tis he will take care of your playthings himself.

TAKING HIS LIKENESS.



"That is right," said the Ostrich," "just keep as you are,
And pray do not move for a while;
I have never yet seen, though I've traveled afar,
Such a beautiful, beautiful smile!
"With the camera given to me by Aunt Jane,
I can 'snap' you, dear sir, in good style;
With you sharp rows of teeth, of which, doubtless, you're vain,
And your beautiful, beautiful smile!"

(Click! And it turned out really an excellent portrait.)

The Web of a Spider.

Have you ever studied the spider's web? If not, catch a young spider, let it run over your hand, then gently shake your hand until it hangs by its thread. If you examine it under a strong magnifying glass you will be surprised at its texture. Some single strands are so fine that it would take 7,000 of them laid side by side to make an inch. The various forms of webs will keep you busy making notes, and you will get many an interesting lesson while studying them.

Wordsworth speaks of

"A spider's web adorning
In a straight and treacherous pass."

It took more than a passing glance for Alexander Pope to be able to speak so truly as in the lines:

"The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
Feels at each thread and lives along the line."

Watch for a little while and you will see how accurately Sir John Davies wrote in the lines:

"A subtle spider which doth sit
In middle of her web, which spreadeth wide;
If aught do touch the utmost thread of it,
She feels it instantly on every side."

Almost everybody has heard how Robert Bruce was encouraged to persevere by watching a patient spider keep on trying until it succeeded. A spider once saved the life of Mohammed. He was fleeing from his enemies and ran into a cave to hide. Immediately after he entered a spider spun a web across the mouth of the cave. When the pursuers came up they pointed to the unbroken web and said no one had entered there, so they turned away.

It is well to read about the habits of animals and insects, but it is wise to add to the reading the habit of close observation. When Jonathan Edwards was a boy only 12 years old he wrote a paper about "the flying spider," which a celebrated speaker in 1870 pronounced "one of the wonders of literature." When it is remembered that this praise was given 150 years after the paper was written, you can see that Jonathan Edwards must have been a boy who observed closely and wrote carefully.

It will pay you well to watch these little creatures—the spiders—as they work. Study their straight lines, their wonderful circles, their spinning and weaving, their swimming and diving. See how they have mastered the problem of the airship. Consider their cleanliness. Watch them in their hunting. Perhaps you may learn a lesson as valuable as that which they suggested to Sir Samuel Brown. He was walking in his garden one morning and saw a spider's web across the path; the swaying blades of grass suggested piers to him, and profiting by the lesson he built a suspension bridge across the Tweed.

The Bear Who Loved the Maid.

Way up in the frozen country near the north pole there lived a large polar bear. He was a handsome fellow of enormous size, with silky white coat of great beauty, of which he was very proud. He was the beau of all the lady polars in the district where he lived and would have been made a "lion" if he had not already been a bear.

Near by there came to live a company of miners who were after gold. One of these miners had a very lovely daughter, and as soon as Mr. Polar Bear saw her he fell desperately in love with her and imagined that, of course, as all the ladies of his own set had loved him, she ought to return his love. But she refused him, and he, growing very savage, determined to have her if he had to carry her off inside.

"Father," she said one day, "you must kill that bear. He's getting too familiar."

"Al right, daughter; never fear. I'll fix him."

But he little knew with whom he had to deal.

The hours went by, and father did not return. Calling one of the men, she started from the house across the ice to find him. Just as they reached the shore a strange sight met their eyes. There came Mr. Polar, rigged out with father's hat and coat, smoking father's pipe upside down, with father's gun trailing on behind, and with a strange look about his stomach as though father might have been resting on the inside.

"We won't go home till mornin'," sang the bear as he staggered along. "Ah, my love, I shall soon infold thee in these loving arms," he cried as he saw the girl on the shore.

"Help, help!" she cried. "Who will save me?"

"Madam, leave him to me," said a miner, who, taking his ax, cut a large hole in the ice.

Mr. Bear, who had tasted too much from father's flask before swallowing father, did not see it.

Crash! Swish! Down he went. As he passed under the miner hit him a blow with the ax. "Some animiles don't know when they's well orf," he said dryly.—Atlanta Constitution.

A Paradox.

"You light a match to make it burn, and you burn a match to make it light."

Epitaphs on Old Graves.

Though the whereabouts of the tomb upon which this epitaph was inscribed cannot be found, the inscription itself is too good to remain unheard. Poor Willie was a martyr to illness, and his relations intended that people should become aware of the fact:

"Willie Adam's gone from here,
Willie's in a higher sphere;
Kindly pause and shed a tear,
Sir or madam.
All diseases, every ill,
Came to trouble little Will;
All we could, we did—but still
Willie Adam."

These are two very curious notices. The first one is in St. Mary's Winton College, Oxford, erected over Thomas Merideth, who was an organist there:

"Here lies one blown out of breath,
Who lived a merry life, and died a Merideth."

The second one is to be seen at Cauldon Church, Staffs, England. It speaks for itself:

"Here lies my poor wife, without bed or blanket,
But dead as a door-nail, God be thankit."

Here is a reminder of the fate that sometimes overtakes those who follow Uncle Peter's example. Readers who have already divested themselves of their "winter flannels" should bear in mind:

"Beneath this stone, a lump of clay,
Lies Uncle Peter Dan'els,
Who, early in the month of May,
Took off his winter flannels."

All those who take seidlitz powder should read this epitaph and heed its warning. It is inscribed on the grave of a young American woman:

"Here lies the body of Mary Ann Lowder,
Who died while drinking a seidlitz powder;
Called from the world to her future rest,
She ought to have waited till it effervesced."

TABLE MANNERS.

The bluejay is a greedy bird; I often watch him eat,
When crumbs are scattered from our door, he snatches all the treat.
He drives the smaller birds away, his manners are so rude,
It's quite a shocking thing to see him gobble down his food!
And sometimes, when I'm not polite, I hear my mother say,
"Why, now I see a little boy who's eating bluejay way."

The sparrows are a noisy set and very quarrelsome,
Because each hungry little bird desires the biggest crumb.
They scold and fight about the food, all chirping, "Me! Me! Me!"
And sometimes, when we children are inclined to disagree
About the sharing of a treat, my mother says, "Why, you
Are acting now the very way the silly sparrows do!"

The jolly little chickadees are perfectly polite;
They never snatch, they never bolt, they never, never fight.
They hold the crumbs down daintily with both their little feet,
And peck off tiny little bites—we love to watch them eat.
And when my sister's good at meals, my mother says, "I see
A little girl who's eating like a darling chickadee!"

—Good Housekeeping.

Taught by an Insect.

Brunel, the famous engineer, was indebted to an insect for a great and useful invention. He was in a shipyard one day, watching the movements of an insect known in English as the naval woodworm, when a brilliant thought suddenly occurred to him. He saw that this creature bored its way into a piece of wood upon which it was operating by means of a very extraordinary mechanical apparatus.

Looking at the animal attentively through a microscope, he found that it was covered in front with a pair of valvular shells; that with its foot as a purchase it communicated rotary motion and a forward impulse to the valves, which, acting upon the wood like a gimlet, penetrated its substance, and that as the particles of wood loosened they passed through a fissure in the feet and thence through the body of the borer to its mouth, where they were soon expelled.

"Here," said Brunel to himself, "is the sort of thing I want. Can I reproduce it in an artificial form?" He forthwith set to work, and the final result of his labors, after many failures, was the famous boring shield with which the Thames tunnel was excavated.

The Largest Loaves.

The largest loaves of bread baked in the world are those of France and Italy. The "pipe" bread of Italy is baked in loaves two feet or three feet long, while in France the loaves are made in the shape of very long rolls four or five feet in length, and in many cases even six feet. The bread of Paris is distributed almost exclusively by women, who go to the various bakehouses at 5:30 a. m., and spend about an hour polishing up the loaves. After the loaves are thoroughly cleaned of dust and grit, the "bread porter" proceeds on the round of her customers. Those who live in apartments or flats find their loaves leaning against the door.